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# The Review of English Studies

VOL. XXIII, No. 92

OCTOBER 1947

## A REINTERPRETATION OF CHAUCER'S THESEUS

By HENRY J. WEBB

THESEUS was one of the most complicated characters that Chaucer delineated when he wrote his *Canterbury Tales*. Superficially he was a 'noble duc', known for his 'chivalrye', a knight who epitomized the phrase 'for pitee renneth soone in gentil herte'. Actually, however, he was far less simple—far more complex—than these phrases would indicate. Underneath his veneer of nobility there was a hint of ignobility; behind the character known for his kindness stood another who was sometimes cruel, if not actually brutal, a highly emotional person blowing hot one moment, cold the next.

Chaucer found the raw stuff of his character in the *Teseide*. Boccaccio's Teseo was not devoid of complexities. He showed, for instance, that he could be both pitiful and harsh: at the behest of Evannes, he gave succour to the noble women whose husbands had been denied burial by Creonte; and after he conquered Thebes, he permitted his men to pillage the city. But Chaucer, a more careful moulder of character than Boccaccio, developed out of Teseo a thoroughly human Theseus, a man who became, under Chaucer's subtle handling, more realistic, more completely medieval, and more artistically consistent.

At the time Chaucer portrayed Theseus in the Knight's Tale, the 'noble duc' was at the height of his glory. He had just conquered Scythia and Thebes and all the world resounded with tales of his 'wysdom and his chivalrie'. But his character soon suffered a change, and by the time he met his death, his name and scutcheon had become tarnished. In the *Legend of Good Women*, Chaucer termed the once-glorious-conqueror 'a traytour' (*L.G.W.*, ll. 2171 ff.), and in the *House of Fame*, upon reviewing his whole career, he remarked: 'The devel be hys soules bane!' (*H.F.*, l. 408).

It is not surprising, therefore, to find Chaucer retaining or emphasizing or adding to those traits of character in Theseus which were ignoble or cruel. In so doing, he manages to suggest that Theseus, even at the time he was performing his most knightly deeds, was possessed of those frailties which, in later life, caused him to be damned.

Four acts of Theseus are outstanding in support of this view, and of the four, three were taken from Boccaccio—with significant changes. They are the total destruction of Thebes, the pillaging of all the country-side, the imprisonment of Palamon and Arcite, and the release of Arcite from prison at the request of Perotheus.

The first of these acts is perhaps the least significant of the four. Theseus, after conquering Thebes, slaying Creon, and putting 'the folk to flyght', proceeded to destroy the city by renting 'adoun bothe wall and sparre and rafter' (K.T., ll. 985-90). This expression of rage—I find it hard to call it anything else, for, with Creon dead, it served little purpose—does not appear in Boccaccio. In the *Roman de Thèbes*, where the destruction does occur, the city is pulled down before Creon's death; it is there an understandable act of war. But Theseus—unless he were attempting to point a doubtful moral—had no reason for his action other than fury.

The destruction of Thebes is closely connected with his pillaging and ravaging the country-side. Once victory was established, Theseus 'dide with al the contree as hym leste' (K.T., l. 1004). That such pillaging was a fourteenth- and fifteenth-century custom is a well-known fact. *The Chronicle of Froissart*, *Le Prince Noire*, and *The Anonimale Chronicle*—to name three familiar medieval works—all make extensive references to such deeds.<sup>1</sup> Yet it was hardly the act of a noble and piteous individual even when judged by medieval standards. Many were the humanitarian voices raised against the wanton destruction of the property of non-belligerents—peasants, craftsmen, merchants, people who had no part in the declaring and fighting of wars and reaped no benefit in the winning of them. Honoré Bonet, Christine de Pisan, Eustache Deschamps, and Gilbert of the Haye were four articulate critics of medieval warfare, and one would hesitate to say that Dan Chaucer was less enlightened than they.

Honoré Bonet, in his *L'Arbre des Batailles*, indignantly condemned the way people who had never worn armour were treated by conquering armies:

Aujourd'huy toutes les guerres sont contre les povres gens laboureurs contre les biens et meubles qu'ils ont. Pourquoy je ne l'appelle pas guerre mais très bien me semble estre pilleries et roberie.<sup>2</sup>

Christine de Pisan, who felt that pillagers 'aught better to be called thevis & robbers than men of armes or cheualrous',<sup>3</sup> protestingly echoed him:

<sup>1</sup> For example, see *The Chronicle of Froissart*, tr. Lord Berners (London, 1901), ii. 51, iv. 13, v. 384; *Le Prince Noire* (London, 1883), ll. 208-37; *The Anonimale Chronicle*, ed. V. H. Galbraith (Manchester, 1927), pp. 34-5.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond L. Kilgour, 'Honoré Bonet: A Fourteenth Century Critic of Chivalry', *P.M.L.A.*, I, Pt. 1, 356.

<sup>3</sup> Christine de Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye*, ed. A. T. P. Byles [E.E.T.S. (London, 1937)], p. 44.

I ask of the / yf whan men of werre are taken in to wages / and that of theyre payement be noo faulte made / Whethere it behoueth them wyth theyre wages truly payed to take vytailles vpon the countrey / and to dyspoylle and take dyverse other thynges as they comonly doo thys day in the realme of Fraunce / I ansuere the certeynly that nay / and that suche a thyng is noo poynt of the ryght of werre / But it is an evylle extorcyon and a grete synne vpon the people.<sup>1</sup>

Gilbert of the Haye in his fifteenth-century translation of Bonet stated practically identical sentiments:

quhy . . . suld the pure labouraris, merchandis, and men of craft bere the charge of the lordis syn? . . . Bot all men seis and wate that the pure laboureris, and sik men, entermettis thame nocht with jugeing, na ordanyng, na governyng of weris. Quhy than suld thai be blamyt tharfore, sen thay in na way entermettis thame tharwith, na has na joy, na plesaunce, na gevis na gude will thareto. . . . Bot all the world wate wele that thir pure folk has na charge, na takis na lyfing, na partage of the weris, na of the wynnyng of armes. Quhy, than, suld thai be oprest be were, or dede of armes?<sup>2</sup>

Even Eustache Deschamps, Chaucer's French contemporary, declared in one of his ballads that

Tout homme armé doit estre part effort  
Creuelx devant, piteux après victoire.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, it is interesting to note that although Boccaccio's Teseo pillaged the conquered people, he also sent out men to care for the wounded and properly dispose of the dead.

. . . ma Teseo cercare  
fatto avea il campo, e ciaschedun ferito  
che fu trovato fatto medicare,  
e ogni morto aveva sepolito; . . . (*Teseida*, ii. 84.)

Chaucer's Theseus did not perform even this half-hearted act of mercy and courtesy; his character thus suffers considerably by comparison.

Again, the heartlessness of Theseus was shown when Arcite and Palamon were brought before him by the 'pilours' who had found them half-dead on the battlefield. Theseus

. . . sone hem sente  
To Athenes, to dwellen in prisoun  
Perpetually, he nolde no raunsoun. (K.T. 1022-4.)

Stuart Robertson in his article 'Elements of Realism in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*' says that Chaucer's Knight 'wishes us to be surprised at the unmercenary character of Theseus in imprisoning Palamon and Arcite when

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert of the Haye's *Prose Manuscript*, 'The Buke of the Law of Armys' (S.T.S., 1901), i. 160-1.

<sup>3</sup> Balade CCCXXXII.

he might have had actual ransom money'.<sup>1</sup> This seems hardly likely. The episode was taken from Boccaccio and was therefore not something which Chaucer had concocted especially for the Knight to tell. Moreover, according to the laws of arms as actually practised by medieval knights, the imprisonment was extremely unchivalrous. The emphasis is not upon ransom, as Professor Robertson says,<sup>2</sup> but upon prison, allusions to the mewing up of Palamon and Arcite 'in a tour, in angwish and in wo' (K.T., l. 1030) being made over thirty times.<sup>3</sup>

Ironically, when Theseus ('this worthy duc') had sent Palamon and Arcite off to prison,

He took his hoost, and hoom he rit anon  
With laure crowned as a conquerour;  
And ther he lyveth in joye and in honour  
Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes mo? (K.T. 1025-8.)

Yes, what more words were needed? A medieval conqueror was supposed to be merciful to his prisoners. Giovanni da Legnano, author of one of the most ancient books dealing with the laws of nations, the *Tractatus de Bello, de Represaliis et de Duello* (1360), wrote:

An captis in bello iusto sit miserandum? Dicendum quod sic, nisi parcendo timeatur perturbatio pacis. Probatur in cap. *noli*, xxiii, q. i, in fin., et per illud capitulum expositum, ut intelligebat Hugolinus, fuit amputatum caput Conradino.<sup>4</sup>

The authority which he cited was Gratian's *Concordia canonum discordantium* or *Decretum*, a treatise written between 1139 and 1150 for the teaching of canon law. There one may find this law of mercy:

Sicut rebellanti et resistenti violentia redditur, ita victo vel capto misericordia iam debetur, maxime in quo pacis perturbatio non timetur.<sup>5</sup>

Christine de Pisan stated that a knight should not be 'cruell' to his prisoners 'or tormente or make hys prysonners to langwysshe in pryson', but he should treat them 'goodly and humaynly' and not 'gyve them cause for to dyspeyre hemselfe'.<sup>6</sup> And Gilbert of the Haye wrote:

<sup>1</sup> Stuart Robertson, 'Elements of Realism in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*', *J.E.G.P.*, xiv (1915), 227-8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> See lines 1022-4, 1030-2, 1056-9, 1063, 1070, 1075-6, 1084-5, 1095, 1104-11, 1174-6, 1185, 1204-7, 1224, 1227-9, 1335, 1339, 1341-3, 1350, 1451-3, 1457-8, 1467-8, 1561-2, 1592, 1734-5, 1769, 1791-2.

<sup>4</sup> Giovanni da Legnano, *Tractatus de Bello, de Represaliis et de Duello*, ed. Thomas Erskine Holland (Washington, 1917), p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Decretum Gratiani*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1891), vol. 187, 1163. Ernest Nys says: 'Pour donner une idée de l'importance du *Decretum*, il suffit de rappeler qu'il fut reproduit en de nombreuses copies manuscrites et que, dès l'invention de l'imprimerie, il eut de multiples éditions.' See introduction to Franciscus de Victoria, *De Indis et de Iure Belli Relectiones*, ed. Ernest Nys (Washington, 1917), p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Christine de Pisan, op. cit., p. 237.

Quhen a prisonare is tane, merci is aucht him and that his maister aw to do him grace, that is to say that his maister aw to kepe him hale, and fere of his persone, that nane do him wrang, na uncourtasy of his persone, na in his honour, na to defoule him in his persoun, sen he has him in keping, and at his merci, and suld mynester him lyging sufficiantly after his estate, at his power, and make him gude and free chere quhill he is with him, and gude company. . . .<sup>1</sup>

But Theseus did not 'mynester' Palamon and Arcite 'lyging sufficiantly' after their estate, nor did he show them 'gude and free chere'. Instead, he made them 'langwysshe' and 'dyspeyre herself'. Denied the medieval right to procure ransom (a right only the Flemings, who 'faisoient guerre mortelle sans rançon', refused to recognize)<sup>2</sup> and thereby denied the hope of ever again being free men, Palamon and Arcite were placed in a 'thikke and stroong' tower, the 'chief dongeoun' of the castle whose windows were barred by 'iren greete and square as any sparre'. Iron 'fettres' were placed upon their 'shynes' and 'cheynes' kept them close. Only the Germans, not so deeply imbued with chivalrous conduct as were their French and English cousins, could be accused of acting in this manner; and at least their deeds could be excused on the grounds of practicality. Of them Froissart wrote:

la coustume des Alemans ne la courtoisie n'est mies tèle; car il n'ont pité ne merci de nul gentil homme, se il eschiet entre leurs mains prisonniers; mès le rançonneront de toute sa finance et oultre, et mettront en ceps, en buies et en fers et plus destroites prisons que il poront, pour estordre plus grant raençon.<sup>3</sup>

Although the purpose of Theseus in confining Palamon and Arcite differed from the Germans' purpose for imprisoning captives, the procedure was the same. A more chivalrous knight would have treated Palamon and Arcite in the conventional manner which the Black Prince used when he captured King John in 1356. John of Valois, after being entertained at supper by the Black Prince, who served before him 'as humbly as he coude', was conveyed to Windsor where, with 'all his householde', he 'went a huntyng and a haukyng ther about at his pleasur, and the lorde Philypp his son with hym: and all the other prisoners abode styll at London, and went to se the kyng at their pleasure, and were receyued all onely on their faythes'.<sup>4</sup>

Such treatment, had it been accorded the Theban princes, would have been courteous and kind. In addition, it would have conformed more closely to the treatment which they received in the *Teseide*. There, they were well housed and courteously served:

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert of the Haye, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronique Normande du XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, ed. A. & E. Molinier [Soc. de l'Histoire de France (Paris, 1882)], p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Chronique de J. Froissart*, ed. Simeon Luce [Soc. de l'Histoire de France, (Paris 1869-78)], v. 64-5. This passage does not appear in Johnes or Berners, but may be found in (*Œuvres de Froissart, Chroniques* (Brussels, 1868), v. 464.

<sup>4</sup> Froissart (Berners), i. 394.

Li prigion furon tutti incarcerati  
 e dati a guardia a chi 'l sapea ben fare;  
 e questi due furon riservati  
 per farli alquanto più ad agio stare,  
 perché di sangue reale eran nati;  
 e felli dentro al palagio abitare  
 e così in una camera tenere,  
 facendo lo servire a lor piacere. (*Teseida*, ii. 99.)

Chaucer, it would seem, deviated from his source with a definite purpose in mind; once again he wished to make Theseus more harsh than Teseo.

Eventually, Arcite was released from prison at the request of Perotheus. At first, this release might seem like a merciful act on the part of Theseus, particularly since he required no ransom in exchange for the freedom. Actually, however, it was merely a spontaneous reaction to the 'preyere' of a boyhood friend, and it touched Palamon not at all. With Arcite gone, Palamon lived in double woe in 'derknesse and horrible and strong prisoun'. Chaucer—or is it the Knight?—pauses in the midst of his story to remark:

Who koude ryme in Englyssh proprely  
 His martirdom? for sothe it am nat I. (K.T. 1459-60.)

To those acquainted with the subsequent history of Theseus and medieval moralizing on the subject—and who among Chaucer's audience would not be?—this release of Arcite while Palamon remained incarcerated for seven long years would undoubtedly have foreshadowed the deed which eventually damned the duke and resulted in his banishment. His relations with Ariadne were, as Lydgate remarked, 'to his noblesse ful contrarious', and his behaviour and subsequent punishment stood as a warning to all princes that justice must be dealt equally to all men.

Heeron he [Boccaccio] maketh a chapitle ful notable,  
 And off his writyng, this was the cause whi:  
 That pryncis sholde examyne ech parti,  
 Off wisdom also and off discrecioun,  
 Withoute a preef nat be parciall;  
 For to a prynce it is confusioun,  
 Yiff atween parties he be nat founde egall,  
 Causid many on for to haue a fall;  
 God suffred such nat longe to contune,  
 Withdrouh ther grace & hyndred ther fortune.

(*Fall of Princes*, i. 4499-508.)

Theseus, by freeing Arcite and keeping Palamon in prison, was not meting out justice in an equal fashion; and from the standpoint of medieval ethics (particularly as applied to rulers), he was something less than 'noble'.

Then what, the reader may ask, are we to make of Theseus' kindlier



deeds? He did show traits of pity when he harkened to the cries of the 'wrecched women' whose husbands had been dishonoured by Creon, when he pardoned Arcite and Palamon at the request of the queen, Emelye, and 'alle the ladyes in the compaignye' (K.T., l. 1750), and when he decided that the great tournament should not be fought *à l'outrance*.

Even in some of these nobler acts there were hints of selfish motives. When Theseus was stopped by the widow of King Cappaneus and the other lamenting women outside the gates of Athens, his first thought was of himself and a possible slight to his person.

What folk been ye, that at myn homcomynge  
Perturben so my feste with crynge?'  
Quod Theseus. 'Have ye so greet envye  
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye? . . . (K.T. 905-8.)

As if suddenly recollecting his chivalry, he continued:

Or who hath yow mysboden or offended?  
And telleth me if it may been amended,  
And why that ye been clothed thus in blak. (909-11.)

There is no doubt that he was emotionally touched by their tale. Chaucer did not seem to be indulging in irony when he spoke of Theseus' 'herte pitous' and wrote:

Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so maat,  
That whilom weren of so greet estaat;  
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,  
And hem conforteth in ful good entente, . . . (954-7.)

Yet note that even at this moment, Theseus thought of what the result of his war on Creon would be—in terms of his own honour and popularity.

He wolde doon so ferforthly his myght  
Upon the tiraunt Creon hem to wreke,  
That al the peple of Grece sholde speke  
How Creon was of Theseus yserved  
As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved. (960-4.)

Then impatiently he rode off to do his deed:

No neer Atthenes wolde he go ne ride,  
Ne take his ese fully half a day, . . . (968-9.)

This impatience, this hot-headed desire for immediate action, showed itself again when Palamon and Arcite, discovered fighting in the woods, revealed their identities to Theseus. His first reaction was to hang them forthwith, and not until Ypolita, Emelye, and all the ladies-in-waiting fell upon their knees, attempting to kiss his feet and beseeching that he pardon the youths, did Theseus relent. His curious thoughts at the moment actually

show him to have been gifted with a knowledge of his own character; at the same time they are an indirect condemnation of several of his past acts.

Fy

Upon a lord that wol have no mercy,  
But been a leon, bothe in word and dede,  
To hem that been in repentaunce and drede,  
As wel as to a proud despitous man  
That wol mayntene that he first bigan.  
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,  
That in swich cas kan no divisoun,  
But weyeth pride and humblesse after oon. (1773-81.)

Finally, one even has the impression that Theseus modified his 'firste purpos' and decided that the tournament should not be a 'mortal bataille' for more than piteous reasons. In the first place, even in war-time, when the courses were run between knights of opposing armies, the tournaments were seldom allowed to result in death;<sup>1</sup> so there was nothing unusual about the act, unless it were a strange mildness in an otherwise rather harsh character. Perhaps, however, Theseus here showed himself to be the same man who had been piqued at his reception by the wretched widows and who had conquered Creon with thoughts of honour in mind. It is not at all improbable that Theseus, sensing the temper of the crowd, changed his original intention in order to curry their favour. At any rate, the reception given his announcement was gratifying.

The voys of peple touchede the hevene,  
So loude cride they with murie stevene,  
'God save swich a lord, that is so good,  
He wilneth no destruccion of blood!' (2561-4.)

The question may still be asked: Why then did Chaucer continually call Theseus 'noble'? It is quite possible, of course, that Chaucer considered Theseus 'noble' much as he considered the Friar a 'noble post' and that the irony behind the former epithet, though more subtle, was none the less as biting as the latter. Certainly, in view of medieval thought on the subject of plundering, imprisonment, and justice, in view of the changes Chaucer made when he borrowed from the *Teseide*, in view of the ultimate opinion of Theseus expressed in the *Legend of Good Women* and the *Hous of Fame*, the term 'noble' is open to suspicion. Indeed, one may well wonder if Palamon was not uttering the truth as Chaucer saw it when he complained that his 'lynage' was 'so lowe ybrought by tyrannye' (l. 1111).

<sup>1</sup> According to Froissart, Theseus' decision was far from unusual and therefore not startlingly pitiful. See jousts in Froissart (Berners), i. 598, 616.



## WILLIAM WITHIE'S NOTEBOOK: LAMPOONS ON JOHN LYLY AND GABRIEL HARVEY

By WARREN B. AUSTIN

PRESERVED in the Sloane collection of the British Museum is an interesting Elizabethan manuscript<sup>1</sup> which, though Joseph Hunter long ago declared it 'well worth examining',<sup>2</sup> has continued to be overlooked by students of the period. It is the 'paperbook' in which William Withie, Fellow of Christ Church, Oxford, wrote various literary exercises during the years 1578-81. Among other pieces of lesser interest, the Withie manuscript contains verse satires on John Lyly and Gabriel Harvey composed at the time both had recently become prominent figures in the world of letters and just after that bitter encounter between them which was a prelude to the pamphlet war of Harvey and Nashe.

Withie,<sup>3</sup> it seems, intended the book at first for his chemical and medical notes and translations; by far the larger part of the fifty-nine folios is devoted to this material. Included are a partial transcription of Thomas Norton's *Ordinal of Alchimy*, an original English verse rendering of the *Schola Salernitana*,<sup>4</sup> and an unfinished prose translation of George Pictorius' *Tuendae Valetudinis Ratio* (Basle, 1554).<sup>5</sup> Having decided later

<sup>1</sup> Sloane MS. 300.

<sup>2</sup> In a brief reference in his unpublished 'Chorus Vatum Anglicorum' (B.M. Add. MS. 24, 488, f. 151, s.n. Withie).

<sup>3</sup> William Withie entered Christ Church in 1564, became B.A. in 1568-9, M.A. in 1572, and B.C.L. in 1578-9 (*Alumni Oxonienses*, iv. 107). The son of John Withie, originally of Berrynarbor, Devon, and his first wife, Jane, daughter of Richard Nicholas of Calne, Wilts., he was a grandnephew of the famous controversialist, John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury (Harleian MS. 1080, ff. 354, 356. Hunter, op. cit., cites this source with the comment: 'Query if he were one of the children of John Withie of Berrynarbor in Devon by Joan Jewel his wife, sister to the Bishop'; a reference to the genealogical charts there given shows, however, that the John Withie who married Jewel's sister was not the father, but the grandfather of William). Withie's father, granted arms by Camden in 1615, was about 100 years old when he died in 1632 (cf. *Pedigrees of the Family of Withie, County Devon*, ed. Rev. F. G. Lee, London, 1880). John Withie, the well-known arms-painter who rode with the heralds on their visitations (cf. *Facsimile of John Withie's Heraldic MS.*, ed. F. C. Price, London, 1878), was William's half-brother. Neither William nor John Withie is listed in the *D.N.B.*

<sup>4</sup> Withie was the author of another manuscript translation of the famous medieval compendium, in tetrameter couplets (Bodleian C.C.C. MS. 265, f. 236 ff.), dated at Oxford, 1 February 1575, and entitled, 'The maintenance of Healthe. Translated & collected by William Withie'. A part of this is quoted by Sir Alexander Croke in his *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* (Oxford, 1830), pp. 89-94.

<sup>5</sup> Doctor Pictorius his Dialoge, by him made, for the preservation of Health, according to the order, of vj vnaturall things (as Phisitions terme them) gathered w<sup>th</sup> diligence out of the writings of the grauer Leeches, a woork very necessary to him that intends to become a

to use the book for other, more strictly literary, exercises, Withie turned it round and upside down, and, working from the last page backward, covered the last nine folios with the verses which concern us here. These compositions include, besides the pieces on Harvey and Lyly, others involving Tarleton, Gascoigne, and the elder Toby Matthew, several versions of Latin epigrams, and an epitaph which Withie had pessimistically prepared for himself in a time of epidemic at Oxford.

Withie's verses, let it be said at once, have little merit; it is all too clear that 'william of Oxford', as he called himself, would never have been a poet. His satirical lines on Harvey and Lyly, however, read against the background of the quarrel the two writers were to renew a decade later in the pages of *Pappe with an Hatchet* and *Pierces Supererogation*, are of considerable interest as contemporary comment on a notorious episode in literary history. They are transcribed here, together with excerpts of other pieces in the manuscript which are not altogether too wretched or otherwise unfit to print. These latter give vivid glimpses of life in Elizabethan Oxford—academic rivalries, the 'Black Assizes', student flirtations—and are probably fairly representative of the kind of occasional versifying that was very general in the universities at the time.

## I

Withie's lampoon on Harvey (written, it is safe to say from its position in the manuscript, early in 1581)<sup>1</sup> reflects the hectic aftermath of the publication during the preceding summer of the Spenser-Harvey correspondence.<sup>2</sup> There had been explosive material in the *Three Proper, and wittie, familiar Letters* supposed to have been exchanged by the poet and his erstwhile tutor: indulging his invective vein in a fiercely satirical passage on the state of Cambridge, Harvey had also arraigned its former Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Andrew Perne, as a second Vicar of Bray, the very personification of a time-serving age. By way of flaunting his beloved 'reformed versifying', he had, moreover, included among examples of his

*Phisitian out of Latine translated for the pleasantnes therof in to Englishe, by william of Oxforde, termed by his frendes WIE.* [The letters are joined to produce a monogram form of 'Withie'] *The Saueguard of Health.*

<sup>1</sup> It occurs at f. 54<sup>r</sup> between the verses addressed to Toby Matthew for New Year's Day, 1581 (f. 54<sup>v</sup>), and those written for the St. Valentine's Day following (f. 53<sup>v</sup>). It appears from his dating of other verses as well that, beginning at the back of the book, Withie wrote in his compositions in chronological order.

<sup>2</sup> *Three Proper, and wittie, familiar Letters: lately passed betwene two Vniuersitie men . . .* London . . . H. Bynneman . . . 1580. (Ent. S.R., 30 June 1580.) That none of Withie's allusions is to the *Two Other very commendable Letters, of the same mens writing . . . More lately deliuered vnto the Printer* suggests that the first three Spenser-Harvey letters may have appeared separately; in the British Museum copy the two sets are bound as one with continuous pagination, but with separate title-pages.

own English hexameters lines entitled *Speculum Tuscanismi*<sup>1</sup> which, though ostensibly general satire of the Italianate and Francophile Englishman, actually strongly suggested the particular person of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

Harvey had not long to wait for the flare-up. No sooner was the pamphlet on the bookstalls than his foes—above all, Lyly, but probably also other writers who moved in the orbit of Oxford's patronage, abetted by those literati of ballad and broadside whom he had scornfully described as 'a company of silly beetleheaded Asses'<sup>2</sup>—went into action. Seizing upon the passage in which he had stigmatized 'youre owld controller' as a contemptible opportunist, they 'incensed and reincensed'<sup>3</sup> Sir James Croft, Controller of the Queen's Household, against him. Next they succeeded in thrusting the satire of Cambridge upon the attention of the Privy Council. Finally, as a crowning effort, Lyly, 'with a special company of good fellowes', did his best to get the Earl of Oxford to charge Harvey before the Council with the writing of libellous verses.

Though he may not have passed some time in the Fleet, as his opponents later insisted,<sup>4</sup> Harvey was in difficulties for a while. By his own admission, passages from the *Letters* were read at the Council table and he was required to make his *amende honorable* to Cambridge in the form of an elaborate treatise on the University. But he had powerful friends at court—Secretary Wilson and Sir Walter Mildmay, both Privy Councillors—and was able to clear himself with Croft easily enough; he also apparently succeeded in making it seem implausible that he had intended to satirize Oxford. In general, Harvey considered that he had come out of the affair rather well, especially since, in defending himself, he had made occasion to bring some of his other writings to the notice of important personages in the state. According to Nashe,<sup>5</sup> Harvey bore himself on his return to Cambridge as if he had scored a notable triumph.

William Withie, Fellow of Christ Church, evidently found the *Three Letters* irritating, yet somehow fascinating, reading. He composed his lampoon on its author with the volume open before him, giving page references to the text for his puns and sarcastic allusions. Irrked by what appeared to him Harvey's pretensions to supreme authority as rhetorician, poet, and critic, he twitted him on his misadventure with the publication

<sup>1</sup> Oxford one-volume *Spenser* (ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt, 1912), pp. 625-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 620.

<sup>3</sup> Harvey's words, here and below [*Works*, ed. A. B. Grosart (The Huth Library, 1884), i. 182-4]. By the term 'controller', i.e. 'critic', Harvey actually meant to designate Dr. Perne.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Nashe, *Works*, ed. R. B. McKerrow (London, 1904-10), i. 299-300; Lyly, *Works*, ed. R. W. Bond (London, 1902), iii. 403; and Greene in the cancelled passage of his *Quippe for an Upstart Courtier*.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* iii. 78.

and alluded in burlesque fashion to various passages. The lines are given as they appear in the manuscript (f. 54<sup>r</sup>), followed by notes explanatory of the satiric references.

Vppon Haruyes vile arrogant English versyfyinge.

Omnipotent Orator, famous Rhetorician Archpott  
 whose front more clearly doeth shyne, methincks, then a brasspott;  
 that great magniloquence y<sup>t</sup> maketh a style very lofty  
 graunt maie we not *Great H.* whoes *wordds* in hand waxt very costly  
 Controule grand Rhetorick but not rulers lett vs Hardly  
*Post reditum* whoe can correct or amend Gregori Haruy?  
 for if he come to him self orators art lost cood he find out.  
 He it tis that holds vp w<sup>t</sup> mind great omnipot empty  
*omnipoesin* I say; wherin is he not very deynty?  
*O blessed vertu, blessed fame, blessed aboundaunc*  
 that manie, good, great, gifts can sett downe, pluck vp an aduance.

W. W.

#### A postscript

nosti manum & stylum. Vale, Chare, corculum.  
 Note that penultima of (Chare,) ought to be  
 writtne in greeke *per ai* dipthongum. thus χαίρει.

Not past a nyne  
 of thes be myne  
 the otheres be  
 my brothers.

youre ffrend Merito tibj, soe forth.

#### NOTES

Title: Withie seems to be ridiculing the subject-matter of Harvey's verses rather than the practice of 'English versifying' as such; several of his other pieces are also in English hexameters.

Margin (lines 1-4): Withie's note—*vid. his english deformed versifying. pag. sic & sic.* Cf. title-page—*Three . . . Letters: touching . . . our English reformed Versifying.*

Line 1: *Orator.* On page 9 (613),<sup>1</sup> Harvey refers to himself as 'a poore Oratour of yours'.

*Archpott.* Page 39 (627): a parody on Harvey's 'Archpoet Homer'. In the terms 'Omnipotent Orator' and 'famous . . . Archpott' Withie is probably satirizing E. K.'s presentation of the *Shepheardes Calender* to Harvey as 'the most excellent and learned both Orator and Poete, Mayster Gabriell Haruey'.

*Rhetorician.* Harvey was Praelector of Rhetoric at Cambridge, 1574-6, and author of *Rhetor, Vel Duorum Dierum Oratio, De Natura, Arte, & Exercitatione Rhetorica* (1577).

<sup>1</sup> The first page references here and below are written into the manuscript by Withie next to the words noted; they are to the *Three . . . Letters* volume of 1580 and have been checked with the British Museum copy. The page numbers in parentheses locate the same passages in the text of the Oxford one-volume *Spenser*.

Lines 4-5: Page 29 (621-2). A reference to the passage beginning, 'The man you wot of, conformable, with his square Cappe on his rounde heade', in which Harvey draws up an indictment of Dr. Andrew Perne, addressing it to Spenser as 'my Testimonial of youre olde Controllers new behauior'. According to Withie, then, the words which 'waxt very costly' to Harvey were those attacking time-serving scholars who, especially in religious matters, registered like weather-vanes the direction of winds blowing from the Court. It was this passage which Sir James Croft, Comptroller of the Queen's Household, was at first persuaded aimed at him. The reference to not 'controlling' (i.e. criticizing) rulers probably takes in the *Speculum Tuscanismi* verses as well.

Line 6: *Post reditum*. From the sub-title of one of Harvey's works: *Ciceronianus vel Oratio post reditum, habita Cantabrigiae ad suos Auditores* (1577). There is a double hit here, since Withie has in mind Harvey's behaviour after his return to Cambridge following the affair of the *Three Letters*, when, according to Nashe, he showed himself far from chastened by the experience.<sup>1</sup>

*Gregori Haruy*. It seems more likely that Withie here ironically calls Harvey 'Gregory the Great' (Cf. 'Great H', l. 4) than that he was ignorant of his first name.

Line 9: Page 39 (626-7). Evidently a sarcastic reference to the pseudo-modesty with which Harvey brings forth various specimens of quantitative verses, including those supposedly the work of his brother, John.

Line 10: Page 34 (624). Quoted from Harvey's hexameter poem, 'A New yeeres Gift . . . In commendation of . . . Vertue, Fame, and Wealth'. Withie's marginal comment—*ipsissimeque Haruy*.

Line 11: A jibe at Harvey's failure to obtain any preferment, for all his lofty aims.

*A postscript*: cf. Harvey's very conspicuous postscripts.

*nosti manum & stylum*: page 49 (632). This pretentious phrase, with which Harvey closes the last of the *Three . . . Letters*, became notorious.<sup>2</sup>

*Vale . . . Corculum*. Page 7 (612). 'Good-bye, sweetheart'—a take-off on the close of Spenser's letter to Harvey. 'Chare' is interjected as an excuse for the punning reference below to the Greek word *χαίρε* used by Harvey as a sub-title in his *Gratulationes Valdinenses* (1578), viz. 'Gabrielis Harveii *χαίρε*, vel Gratulationis Valdinensis Liber primus'.

*Not past a nyne*. . . . Page 8 (612). Harvey introduces verses as by his brother, John, with the assurance: 'Beleeue me, I am not to be charged with aboue one, or two of the Verses: and a foure or fiue wordes in the rest . . . he brought me these foure lustie Hexameters, altered since not past in a worde, or two.' This occurs at page 39 (627), however. By his reference to page 8 (i.e. to the close and postscript of Spenser's letter) here and in the phrase below, 'youre ffreind Merito tibi', and by the significant juxtaposition of the injunction, 'Nosti manum & stylum', Withie seems to be hinting his suspicion that Harvey wrote himself, or at least edited, the Spenser letter.

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. iii. 78.

<sup>2</sup> It was used against Harvey by the authors of the Latin comedy *Pedantius*, probably first presented on a Cambridge college stage, 6 February 1581, at just about the time (see p. 298, n. 1) Withie was penning his lines (cf. the edition of *Pedantius* by G. C. Moore Smith in *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas*, Band 8, Louvain, 1905, pp. xlix, 73); Nashe plays with the phrase in *Have With You, to Saffron Walden* (*Works*, iii. 80); and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, full of references to the Harvey-Nashe controversy, Shakespeare has Biron say of Armado's letter (iv. i. 98): 'I am much deceived but I remember the style' (cf. Rupert Taylor, *The Date of Love's Labour's Lost*, New York, 1932, p. 40).

## II

Withie's satirical lines on Lyly, written, it would seem, late in 1580,<sup>1</sup> may possibly refer to some unknown episode in Euphues' career at about this time; but it is much more probable that they allude, in a rather cryptic fashion, to the role he played in the attempted discomfiture of Harvey. As we have seen, Lyly moved against Harvey after the publication of the correspondence with Spenser, which included what he took to be a burlesque portrait of his patron, the Earl of Oxford. Having already castigated Lyly on this score in his *Four Letters and Certain Sonets* (1592), Harvey returns to the incident with self-righteous indignation in *Pierces Supererogation* (1593):

Papp-hatchet, desirous for his benefit, to currie favour with a noble Earle; and in defecte of other meanes of Commendation, labouring to insinuate himselfe by smooth glosing, & counterfait suggestions, (it is a Courtly feate, to snatch the least occasionet of aduantage, with a nimble dexteritie); some yeares since prouoked me . . . without priuate cause, or any reason in the world.<sup>2</sup>

Lyly must have been chagrined when the patron on whose behalf he had acted thought it more politic to accept Harvey's denial of any intent to satirize him in the *Speculum Tuscanismi* verses than to seem to acknowledge some traits of resemblance to himself in the caricature. Although we have no evidence apart from the Withie verses of Lyly's being humiliated for his part in the affair, he seems to have been aggrieved over the outcome: in *Pappe with an Hatchet* (1589) he promises, given the opportunity, to pay off a ten-year-old grudge against Harvey, or, as he puts it, to 'lambacke' his adversary 'with ten yeares prouision'.<sup>3</sup>

Withie's lampoon appears in the manuscript (f. 56<sup>r</sup>) without heading, as follows:

Ile strayne my penne for yo<sup>r</sup> delight  
 this prety challenge to requight  
 to Lyllyes you know it falleth by lott  
 to come by preferment to the bowpott  
 wherby ye may gesse his poetry stans  
 in stone potts, & black Jacks, in Tankers & canns.  
 Wherin hauing plenty of wine, beare, & ale  
 He is becom deyntie in telling a tale  
 For mirth I may lyke him to Itys y<sup>t</sup> came  
 to the swallow Progne w<sup>c</sup> was as his dame  
 He tatld & twytled, w<sup>c</sup> rayسد disdaine

<sup>1</sup> They occur on f. 56<sup>r</sup> before verses written as a gift for the New Year, 1581.

<sup>2</sup> *Works*, ii. 122; cf. also, *Works*, i. 183-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Works* (ed. Bond), iii. 400; Bond (i. 28-30) connects his inciting Oxford against Harvey with the disgrace Lyly mentions later in a letter to Burleigh.



to her, when great matters troubl'd hr braine  
 As then not abiding this Ape for to play  
 In mood soe Melancholike her soone she did slay  
 Perhapps sorrowing afterwards, but to make it the best  
 She mynst him and shreidd him like y<sup>e</sup> fleshe of a best  
 And gaue him y<sup>e</sup> father I knowe noe cause why  
 All to be baked, sans y<sup>e</sup> head, in a pye.  
 Thus to Apply, by tatling to them  
 as I thincke Lyly lets not oft tymes to great men  
 whoe troubl'd perchaunc w<sup>t</sup> matters of wayght  
 plucks vp by y<sup>e</sup> root this Lyly growne strayght.  
 the rather because like an infant or child  
 he playes and he flaunts beinge oft begild  
 him great men & graue men doe laughe still to scorne  
 Thus checked, they bedd him goe where he was borne.  
 Most happy is he if y<sup>t</sup> be worst  
 to bedd him be packing whenc he came furst  
 yf y<sup>a1</sup> doe not as she did reseruing the head  
 to throwe at the father when Itys was dead  
 This Item is good; thine head then to saue  
 Take heed lest thy father say here hangs a knaue.

Challenged to write something against Lyly, Withie begins by declaring that Lyly's poetry is as much associated with the ale-pot as his flower-namesake is with the bough-pot. Well soaked in liquor, indeed, Lyly is adept at tale-telling (i.e. tale-bearing). Like Itys in the myth, who was slain by his harassed mother, Progne, as he prattled foolishly to her and was then served to his father in a pie,<sup>1</sup> Lyly was scorned and sent packing when he carried tales to great men engaged in affairs of state.

In other words, Lyly brought his complaint against Harvey before the great men of the realm, in the Privy Council, and was treated with contempt. By Progne, 'which was as his dame', Withie may have meant to suggest Burleigh, to whom Lyly addressed appeals and whose *alumnus* he declared himself to be.<sup>2</sup> Withie is warning Lyly to beware lest through continuing to abuse the patience of statesmen with his tattling he suffer a fate like that of Itys, presumably meaning that he will be punished severely by his protector, Burleigh. If, moreover, by Lyly's 'father' is to be understood the Earl of Oxford, the last lines mean that Lyly can consider

<sup>1</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vi. We have a contemporary account of the Latin tragedy *Progne* as played before Queen Elizabeth in the Hall at Christ Church, on Thursday, 5 September 1566. (W. Y. Durand, 'Palæmon and Arcyte, Progne, Marcus Geminus, and the theatre in which they were acted, as described by John Bereblock (1566)', *P.M.L.A.*, xx. (1905), 502-28.) Withie was already a student then and may have taken part in this production.

<sup>2</sup> *Works* (ed. Bond), i. 6.

himself lucky his offence does not prove so embarrassing to his patron that the Earl is forced to cast him off in disgust.

Withie's lines, so interpreted, bear out Harvey's accusation that Lyly brought charges against him; they suggest, moreover, that Lyly's action recoiled against himself, and make it not at all surprising that he should long have nursed bitter feelings against Harvey as a result of the episode.

To sum up, William Withie, finding in Harvey and Lyly, after the scandal over the *Three Letters* of 1580, shining targets for the shafts of his academic satire, amused himself and his friends by composing lampoons on the two writers. Harvey was notorious for having been haled before the Privy Council on charges of libellous writing, and Lyly, in turn, for giving publicity to Harvey's alleged burlesque portrait of the Earl of Oxford and so, by his inept meddling, embarrassing that nobleman. Both were, moreover, regarded with hostility at their respective universities on another count. After an inglorious career at Oxford, Lyly had aroused resentment by holding his Alma Mater up to ridicule in *Euphues*. Antagonism against Harvey at Cambridge, similarly intensified by his satirical picture of conditions at the university, found a vent about the time of Withie's verses, in the caricature of Harvey in the Latin comedy, *Pedantius*. Since he uses the same method of satirizing Harvey by quoting with ludicrous effect snatches and snippets from his works, it seems a fair assumption that Withie had heard of the Cambridge play.

### III

'Certayne younge conceytes and poetically devises, copied owt of a schollars paperbooke'—Harvey's *Letter-book*, f. 70.

Three of Withie's pieces deal with his academic mishaps. In one of these (f. 54<sup>v</sup>), he assures Toby Matthew, Dean of Christ Church,<sup>1</sup> that although that worthy, whom he had thought his friend, has deprived him of the bursarship, he is willing to let bygones be bygones.

M<sup>r</sup> Deanes new years gyft  
for putting me out of  
my Bursershipp 1581.  
To the right worshipfull, his good ffrend when he  
lysteth, m<sup>r</sup> Doctor Mathew Deane of Christs  
Church a good newe yeare. Geuen him that day  
his wiff was churched in  
Christs church in Oxford.

<sup>1</sup> Toby Matthew (1546-1628), later Archbishop of York, was dean of Christ Church, 1576-84. He was an efficient administrator of the college, 'busy and pragmatial', his rule, however, being marked by a notorious scuffle between him and the Principal of Brasenose in St. Mary's Church—in spite of his own orders 'De pugnis et litibus reprimendis' [C. E. Mallet, *A History of the University of Oxford* (London, 1924), ii. 44].



Yf happ, and hope should couple still  
 myne happ should happne to my will.  
 Yf hope with happ shall disagree  
 mine hope noe wayes can further me.  
 myne hope shall hold himself accurst  
 Yf happ thus happ to chuse the worst.  
 Deceau me not in future time,  
 yo<sup>r</sup> praesens then committs noe cryme.  
 Brefe will I be, for hold is chaught  
 of many wordds to make them nought  
 well then to that I here intend  
 Ile yeald, before Ile leese a ffrend.  
 But if I yeald and leese him to  
 Ile learne hereafter thus to doe.  
 A tyme ile chuse for *talio*;  
 as now I doe for *taceo*.  
 But this is spoke to end the yeare  
 as somewhat answerable  
 now chaunge I mood to please yo<sup>r</sup> eare  
 if it be tollerable.  
 In lyncking yeares w<sup>t</sup> lucky lyncks  
 in tyngie tymes, & tydes together  
 in thyncking good, good lucke mythyncks  
 should come to you soe much the rather;  
 And that it maye to yo<sup>u</sup> and yours  
 I aske it of superio<sup>r</sup> powers. vale.

not hautye, but an harty ffrend  
 not a ffrend (si inter pares amicitia)  
 but yo<sup>r</sup> worshippis in goodwill  
 Willm Withye.

In the other two (f. 53<sup>v</sup>) he satirizes those who caused his defeat for the proctorship both in 1580 and 1581. They are headed respectively:

1580 When Stone<sup>1</sup> stood to be Procter those that played theire parts  
 against me were thes.

and

The next yeare also y<sup>t</sup> Chalphehill<sup>2</sup> might preuent my standing to be  
 procter as I did before, he misusing me egregiously brought me in  
 odium of my fellowes, wheruppon this followed.

A merry episode in the relations of town and gown is the occasion of  
 some English hexameter verses (f. 54<sup>r</sup>). Toby Matthew, like his famous son

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Stone, Christ Church, B.A. 1572, M.A. 1575, proctor in 1580 (*Alumni Oxonienses*).

<sup>2</sup> Richard Caulfield (also, Calfhill), Christ Church, B.A. 1574, M.A. 1577 (*ibid.*).

ever the wit, had suggested the mock founding of a fellowship by Furse, the inn-keeper.<sup>1</sup> This piece is headed as follows:

A fellowshipp first faynd by m<sup>r</sup> Deane of Christchurch of the beare,  
for eury Christmas & ffurse to be the flounder, whoes armes they  
desyred me to blaze. in englishe Hexamet.

With the wife of the same Furse, young William of Oxford had been carrying on a flirtation which is amusingly recounted in a prose note and some verses (again, English hexameters) for St. Valentine's day, 1581 (f. 53<sup>v</sup>).

At Furse's ordinary m<sup>rs</sup> Alice his wiffe hearing  
I was busy now and then in versyfing, would needes  
entreat a fewe verses of me; I make it deynty (because  
I thought she mockt me), for y<sup>t</sup> time sayed I could  
scarce intend yt, and went my way. Not long time after  
came St. valentines day, on w<sup>c</sup> day I being brought  
thither by chaunce I must (for sooth) before I went  
be her valentine, & all for my verses; well y<sup>t</sup> past but  
I told her noe verses would come vnles she would lend  
me a certaine trim diamond that she had vppon her  
finger; w<sup>c</sup> she denyed, for she was then to vse it;  
then I replyed, because you can not find in yo<sup>r</sup> hart to  
trust me w<sup>t</sup> a ring, I will not trust you w<sup>t</sup> my ryme;  
well then she sayed she drust trust me for a ring an  
other time; soe (to be shorte) an other time coming  
thether, I spyed an other ring a Turchy on her finger,  
dare you trust me w<sup>t</sup> this (qth I) I yt I dare (qth she)  
& soe deliuered it me. This was about the chosing of  
the Procters at w<sup>c</sup> time I took a great foyle, and yet  
for all that I sett my penne to paper, & mad in this  
manner. . . .

Withie had probably no high opinion of Mistress Alice's discernment in such matters, for the verses he offered her are almost unbelievably bad. Here are the last few (f. 53<sup>r</sup>), these being on the whole somewhat above the average of those that went before.

. . . Thus fine Ales fare ye well; for a time fare ye well bonie ladye  
beare w<sup>t</sup> me for a while in dumps have I byn verie latlye;  
w<sup>h</sup> if once I were out, yo<sup>r</sup> prayse w<sup>t</sup> a fflaunte, tara, tina,  
helpe wood I fayne to aduaunce; compacted Corps verie fina  
first wood I touche then ffleshe soe freshe, vaynes azured also,  
w<sup>t</sup> face Angelicall attyred fyne lyke a virgo

<sup>1</sup> Furse's Inn, known also as the Bear, lay within two hundred yards of Christ Church on the west side of Bear Lane towards the High (*Oxford Historical Society Publications*, xv. 149).

w<sup>t</sup> Gemmes soe pretious, w<sup>t</sup> Dymond, Perle, Rubie, Turkey  
 all to the shewe verie fyne; but her selfe most fine bonie Ladye.  
 Trust me as Athis of Ops a boye loued once of a Goddess  
 soe mote I ioye, pretie mops to ben in fauor o' Fursess  
 All things acceptinge w<sup>t</sup> lucke lyke sauinge in one thinge<sup>1</sup>  
 gesse Valentyne what it is, & then shall you haue home yo<sup>r</sup> old ringe.

1581 W. W.

Withie was among the large number of Oxonians who were stricken in the outbreak of typhus fever at the Oxford 'Black Assizes' in the summer of 1577;<sup>2</sup> he later copied into his notebook (f. 51v) the epitaph in fourteeners which he had prepared for himself when he feared the worst.

Myne owne Epitaphe mad in the yeaer  
 1577. at w<sup>c</sup> time there dyed many by y<sup>e</sup>  
 assysse kept in Oxford; I being very sicke  
 and thus it standeth for hereafter.

The wise and learned Socrates, condemned for to dye  
 a cuppe of poyson offered, receaued patientlye.  
 Contemninge death, when one did saye, commaund me w<sup>at</sup> yo<sup>u</sup> will  
 nothinge comaunded he at all but lyinge very still  
 Lyft vp his eyne vnto the skye and sayed I doe presente  
 vnto the maker of the world, my soule, as it was lente.  
 In like sorte I, but differinge, in witt as well as lore  
 did take my sicknes willingly as health I did before,  
 Contemninge Death, loe here I lye, bewayle me not at all.  
 I lacke nothinge, I feele noe harme, nor none I trust I shall,  
 ffor that my soule presented is to him that did it make,  
 I trust therefore and am assured, that he will mercye take.

denuo rescriptum 1581 W W finis<sup>3</sup>

23<sup>o</sup> Sept.

<sup>1</sup> 'Athis of Ops', i.e. Attis, the young shepherd beloved by Cybele, castrated himself after breaking the vow of chastity he had made to the goddess.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Holinshed, iii. 1270. The epidemic was a sensational event. The following description is taken from 'a short Censure of the late sickness at Oxford', which Thomas Cogan appended to his *Haven of Health* (London, 1584), p. 281: '... that disease specially, which was at Oxforde at the assises, anno 1577, and began the sixth day of Julie, from which day to the twelfth day of August next ensuing, there dyed of the same sicknesse fwe hundred and tenne persons, all men and no women. The chiefe of which were, the two Judges, sir Robert Bell, Lorde chiefe Baron, and maister Sergeant Baram, maister Doile the high Shirife, fwe of the Justices, foure counsaillours at the lawe, and an atturtrie. The rest were of the iurers, and such as repayed thiether. All infected in a manner at one instant, by reason of a dampe or miste which arose among the people within the Castle yerd and court house, caused as some thought, by a traine and trecherie of one Rowlande Ienkes booke binder of Oxforde, there at that time arraigned and condemned: But (as I thinke) sent onely by the will of God as a scourge for sinne, shewed chieffie in that place, and at that great assemblee, for example of the whole Realme: that famous Universitie, being as it were the fountaine and eye that should giue knowledge and light to all Englande.'

<sup>3</sup> There occurs in Bodleian MS. Tanner 79 (f. 182) a 'note of such as ar ded of this

Several other pieces in the manuscript are of some interest.

An Epigram vpon Gaskins  
conceit; the Lord hath need.<sup>1</sup>

Temporibus nostris quicunque placere curabit  
Det, quærat, capiat, plurima, pauca, nihil.  
Whoe seeks for to please; the better to lyue  
This lesson learne he must, first; let him geue.  
Next lett him craue yea seeke, then lett him take  
Muche, litle, nothinge, for my good Lordings sake. W. W.

In the imitation of thes ij latine verses  
vpon Castanea; thes foure english verses  
be made vpon Castor.

Arbor est in siluis quæ scribitur octo figuris } Castanea  
vnde tribus demptis, vix est in mille puellis.  
There is a beast that treades the ground  
that wants but one of seauen Castor  
Too taane away; the rest is found  
to runne a pase to heauen.<sup>2</sup> W. W.

*Quid pluma leuius?* More lyght what is sayed to be then a feather?  
*Fulmen; Quid fulmine?* Ventus lightning; then lightning what? the wind &  
ye weather.

*Quid vento?* more light what is found then weather, and wind?

*Mulier.* To answer you breffly all woman kynd

*Quid muliere?* more light then a woman can theire be ought?

*Nihil.* yeas marye the thinge y<sup>t</sup> is called right nought.<sup>3</sup>

Si nihil attuleris ibis Homere foras.

Come Homer if thou list, and bring thy Muses trew  
yett Homer if thou bring nought els but them adew.<sup>4</sup>

Because he wore when he was finest a white  
Sattyn doublett

infection' which was evidently scribbled while the epidemic was raging and speaks of 'Such Scollers and Townsmen w<sup>ch</sup> ar ded in Oxenford to the number of one Hundred. & xl ar approved to be ded at the Castell att the Assises And yet remaining many Sike and Like to dy'. Another contemporary jotting, dated 15 August 1577, records the morning and evening prayer 'a D. Tobia Matthæo Decano Ecclesiæ Christi, Oxon. suis Christicolis conscripta Walingfordiæ rusticantibus causa pestis' (Bodl. MS. Top. Oxon. E. 5).

<sup>1</sup> F. 55<sup>v</sup>. George Gascoigne wrote a satirical poem, headed 'A gloze upon this text, *Dominus iis opus habet*'. [Works, ed. John W. Cunliffe (Cambridge, 1907), i. 70-3.]

<sup>2</sup> F. 55<sup>v</sup>. Castanea : casta : : castor : cast (to calculate astrologically).

<sup>3</sup> F. 55<sup>r</sup>. Withie's translation of a Latin riddle that is found frequently, in varying forms: e.g. MS. Ashmole 38, f. 202<sup>v</sup>: 'Quid pluma leuius—flamen. Quid flamine—ventos. Quid vento? Mulier. Quid Muliere—Nihil'. Cf. N. & Q., 3rd Ser., ix. 511. Cf. also *Return from Parnassus*, v. i. 1416.

<sup>4</sup> F. 51<sup>v</sup>. Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, ii. 280.

Candidus est Whytus,<sup>1</sup> albusque, benignus amator  
Hominibus coram whytes lyghte doth shyne like a Taper.

W. W. 1581<sup>2</sup>

Not longe sence, gaasinge on my couerlett w<sup>c</sup> very much delyghted  
mine eyes w<sup>t</sup> his gaye & goodly colors, at a venture vppon the Colors  
I wrote; thus.

Yellowe, redd, green, and whyte myne eyes (methincks) doe much delyght.  
Taunye, Purple, blacke, and Blewe those foure will haue none other hew.  
In matching them vnto my minde the whyte w<sup>t</sup> blew doeth well by kinde  
next green, and yellow, delightsome be the redd, and yellow be fyree  
the white in greene is pretie and gaye the yellow w<sup>t</sup> blew doeth well awaye.  
the redd, and green can not displease, the greene and blew shewe like the seas.  
The whyt w<sup>t</sup> Purple is pretie to vew the redd is no lesse conioyned w<sup>t</sup> blew.  
the Tauny and Russett is not of the best but blacke & blew as sadd as the rest.  
Oringe taunye, blew, and greene, be somew<sup>at</sup> princlye to be seene.  
Blacke and whyte will skant agree because they be cleane contraree.

finis q<sup>th</sup> W. Withy.<sup>3</sup>

vppon Helen Noble for schratching me when soe  
euer I toucht her, & flying my presenc euer after.  
I latly latined her name thus.

Ah Helena haud lena est, sed visa est ipsa Leena<sup>4</sup>  
Mobilis; illa cupit, nobilis esse; nequit

q<sup>th</sup> W. W. 1581—Sep. 22.<sup>5</sup>

Tarleton being hissed at Oxon potted oute these:

I am not in that golden land wheare Jason wonn the fleese  
but I *am* in that hissing land wheare freshmen play the geese.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Several of the name White were in residence at this time, none, however, in Withie's college. 'Whyte and pricked doublets' were among the eccentricities of dress forbidden at Christ Church (Mallet, op. cit. ii. 42).

<sup>2</sup> F. 53<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> F. 53<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Leena, i.e. Leana, a lioness.

A free rendering, offered hesitantly:

Ah! a *Helen*—but far from a 'fast' dame.

More like a touchy she-lion.

To be *Noble*, that's her aim—

She can keep on tryin'!

<sup>5</sup> F. 52<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> F. 51<sup>v</sup>. J. O. Halliwell [ed. *Tarlton's Jests, and News out of Purgatory* (London, Shakespeare Society Publications, 1844), XIII. xxxi] quotes this anecdote in a different version from Vaughan's *Golden Fleece* (1626). Another version occurs in Sloane MS. 1489 (f. 20<sup>v</sup>):

Tarleton being upon y<sup>e</sup> stage in a towne where he expected for civill attention to his prologue, & seing noe end of y<sup>r</sup> hissing, he brake forth at last into y<sup>is</sup> Sarcasmical taunt

I livde not in y<sup>e</sup> Golden age, w<sup>th</sup> Jason won y<sup>e</sup> fleerce

But now I am on Gothams stage, where flooles doe hisse like Geese.

## FIVE SHAKESPEARE NOTES

By HELGE KÖKERITZ

THE deeper one delves into Shakespearian textual criticism, the more one is struck by the nonchalant, amateurish fashion in which purely linguistic problems have often been handled. No appreciable change in approach and method seems to have taken place since the eighteenth or early nineteenth century, when the would-be linguist's chief equipment for his task was an unbridled imagination, when loose conjectures based on superficial resemblances solved textual cruces and prompted emendations. The literary scholar of to-day who edits Shakespeare frequently acts as if there was no such thing as a history of the English language or as if the results of competent philological research were of no concern in the matter. Thus, when dealing with an obscure word, he is apt to take the spelling for his only guide. Upon it alone he bases his assumptions and conclusions, blind to the fact that English spelling and pronunciation often have very little in common, that throughout the centuries each has followed its own course, and that what really matters is the spoken form, very rarely its graphic representation. In earlier articles<sup>1</sup> I have pointed out the harmful effect of this cult of the spelling upon the interpretation of words and passages in Chaucer and Shakespeare. The following five notes are, by and large, of the same nature. They offer simple, logical solutions to textual problems with which generations of scholars have been wrestling, and at the same time they show, I trust, the significance of the linguistic approach for the elucidation of such problems.

### I. *An Unusual Rhyme*

The second stanza of the seventeenth poem in *The Passionate Pilgrim* begins as follows (ll. 13-14):

In blacke morne I, all feares scorne I,  
Love hath forlorne me, living in thrall.

The triple rhyme *morne I: scorne I: forlorne me* has elicited some quite superfluous comment from early and modern editors. According to Steevens (1780) the metre as well as the rhyme in this passage are defec-

<sup>1</sup> See 'Elizabethan *Che vore ye*, "I warrant you"', *M.L.N.* lvii. 98-103; 'Shakespeare's *night-rule*', *Language*, xviii. 40-4; 'Two Sets of Shakespearean Homophones', *R.E.S.* xix. 357-65; 'Thy Pole-Clipt Vineyard', 'The Tempest', iv. i. 68', *M.L.R.* xxxix. 178-9; 'Touchstone in Arden', *M.L.Q.* vii. 61-3; 'The Beast-eating Clown', *M.L.N.* lxi. 532-5; 'The Wyf of Bathe and Al Hir Secte' (about to appear in *P.Q.*).

tive; he suspected some corruption and wished to read: 'Love forlorn I, i.e. I love forlorn, i.e. deserted, forsaken, &c.' Malone (1790) pointed out that all the printed copies agree in the reading of the text and that the metre is the same as in the corresponding line 16 ('O cruell speeding, fraughted with gall'); he found that the author appeared to have paid little attention to the exactness of the rhyme and compared it with the rhyme *dame: remaine* in the preceding stanza (ll. 10, 12). Recently Rollins has adduced the reading of the Harleian MS.: 'lo how forlorne I, live . . .', which was unknown to Malone and in which Rollins finds some support for the conjecture of Steevens.<sup>1</sup>

Both Steevens and Malone failed to see that metrically there is no difference between lines 14 and 16 on the one hand and the corresponding lines 2, 4, 26, and 28 of the poem on the other,<sup>2</sup> except for the fact that the second halves of 26 and 28 may have three syllables instead of four. *Hath* is not infrequently reduced to an enclitic 'th in Shakespeare, and so far as I can see there is nothing to prevent us from reading *cruel* as a monosyllable, *cru'l*. Nor is the rhyme 'defective' even though it may be called unusual or perhaps even unique. Shakespeare apparently treated the nasal consonants *m*, *n*, *ng* as one and the same sound, rhyming, e.g. *times: designs* (*R III* iv. iv. 416-17), *time: mine* (*J I* i. i. 113-14), *sing: win: him* (*TC III* iii. 211-13). Hence it follows that the nasal combination *nm* in *forlorn me* could rhyme with the single *n* in *mourn*, *scorn*.

What editors of the poem have principally objected to is, of course, the seeming inadequacy of making two feminine rhymes ending in *I* [ai] agree with one ending in *e* [i:]. It is true that ME. *i* in *I* had become a diphthong in Shakespeare's time, probably [ai], and that for nearly two hundred years ME. *ē* in *me* had been [i:]. But this diphthongization of ME. *i* does not necessarily imply that the pronoun *I* was always pronounced as a diphthong. Like *my*, *by*, frequently pronounced [mi], [bi] in an unstressed position, it had a weak form [ɪ] used enclitically and of exactly the same quality as the vowel in unstressed *me* [mi]. This weak form [ɪ] may still be heard in the dialects of Suffolk and Yorkshire<sup>3</sup> in such questions as *am I?*, *have I?* It survives, moreover, in the expression *shilly-shally*, at first written *shill I*, *shall I*, and in *willy-nilly*, where, however, -y may stand also for *ye* or *he*

<sup>1</sup> *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare. The Poems*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Philadelphia and London, 1938), pp. 304 ff. The Harleian reading must be due to deliberate tampering with the text for the sake of the rhyme.

<sup>2</sup> These lines run: (2) *My Rams speed not, all is amiss*; (4) *Harts nenying, causer of this*; (26) *Greene plants bring not forth their die*; (28) *Nimphes blacke peeping fearefully*. If we read *their* (l. 26) and *feare-* (l. 28) as dissyllables, these half-lines will have the normal four syllables.

<sup>3</sup> H. Kökeritz, *The Phonology of the Suffolk Dialect* (Uppsala, 1932), § 164; J. Wright, *E.D.Gr.*, § 403.



(O.E.D.).<sup>1</sup> The above lines in *The Passionate Pilgrim* should consequently be read as if the first two rhymes were written *mourn-y, scorn-y*.

## II. A Double Pun in Timon of Athens

When Apemantus visits Timon at his cave in the woods (*TmA* III. iv) the two cynics at once fall to reviling one another. In the course of their exchange of abuses there occurs the following snatch of dialogue (ll. 305-10; the spelling is that of the First Folio):

*Ape.* . . . There's a medler for thee, eat it.

*Tim.* On what I hate, I feed not.

*Ape.* Do'st hate a Medler?

*Tim.* I, though it looke like thee.

*Ape.* And th' hadst hated Medlers sooner, thou should'st have loued thy selfe better now.

The pun on *medlar* and *meddler* has escaped no one, but the use of *though* in l. 308 has given rise to some speculation. Dr. Johnson did not understand it and proposed, very ingeniously, to emend the line to *I thought it looked like thee*. A similar emendation was actually made by Rann,<sup>2</sup> who boldly printed the line: *Ay, for it looks like thee*. Other commentators have tried to read a meaning 'since, because' into *though*, a wild conjecture to which Rolfe<sup>3</sup> rightly took exception. Deighton<sup>4</sup> contrived to twist the sentence to mean 'though it be as handsome as yourself', adding the following bit of philological nonsense: 'A double-headed shaft, since a medlar is not without likeness to a snarling dog with teeth and gums bare; "though" is by some taken as = since, for, or because, but supposing the conjunction could be so used, if it were here inferential, we should have the indicative, "looks", not the subjunctive, "look".'

*Medlar—meddler* is not, however, the only word-play in the above lines. The existence of another far more important pun has hitherto remained unnoticed. I am referring to the quibble on *eat* and *hate*. In sixteenth-century London English initial *h* was commonly silent, as can be seen from such Shakespearian puns as *heir—hair* (*CE* III. ii. 127), *here apparent—heir apparent* (*I H IV*, I. ii. 65), *hour—whore* (*CE* IV. ii. 53 ff., *AYLI* II. vii. 26 ff.,

<sup>1</sup> O.E.D. suggests that the vowel-alteration in *shilly-shally* is due to the same kind of reduplication as in *dilly-dally*, *wishy-washy*. I do not believe that this is the correct explanation. The OE. present subjunctive of the verb *sculan* was *scyle* in the singular, which appears as *s(c)hille* in ME.: *Schille ich an utest uppen ow grede, ich shal swo stronge ferde lede* . . . (*Owl and Nightingale*, l. 1683). It seems likely therefore that *shilly-shally* is a fossilized ME. locution combining the subjunctive and the indicative: *shille I, shall I* (cf. the quotation from the *Owl and Nightingale*).

<sup>2</sup> J. Rann, *The Dramatic Works of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1786), v. 461.

<sup>3</sup> W. J. Rolfe, *Shakespeare's Tragedy of Timon of Athens* (New York, 1882), p. 164.

<sup>4</sup> K. Deighton, *The Works of Shakespeare, Timon of Athens* (London, 1905), p. 116.



*MWW* II. ii. 39), &c.<sup>1</sup> The vowels in *eat* and *hate* (ME. *ē* and *ā* respectively) usually had the same pronunciation, approximately [ɛ:], so that the two words were pronounced exactly alike on the Globe stage. Hence it was possible for Timon and Apemantus to indulge in a grim play on *eat* and *hate*, a fact that immediately explains the use of *though* here.

### III. *A Biblical Echo in Cymbeline*

Having received the news that her husband is at Milford Haven in Wales, Imogen is all excitement to find out how quickly she may be able to get there. She implores Pisanio (*Cy* III. ii. 58-63) to

... say, and speake thicke / ... how far it is  
To the same blessed Milford. And by'th'way  
Tell me (F he) how Wales was made so happy, as  
T'inherite such a Haven.

This speech, in particular its last line, has a familiar ring, which is accentuated if we substitute *heaven* for *Haven*; then Imogen's words seem to echo quite clearly the phraseology of the first part of the Sermon on the Mount. To my knowledge, no commentator has noticed that Imogen's reference to Milford as *blessed*,<sup>2</sup> her use of the phrase *t'inherite such a Haven*, and her apostrophe to the wax-giving bees earlier in the same speech (II. 35-6): 'Blest be/You bees that make these locks of counsel!' must have been inspired by the following verses in Matthew V:

3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
5. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.
10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Coverdale's translation of 1535 does not differ here from the Authorized Version of 1611 except in the spelling of individual words.

Imogen's choice of expression cannot be accidental. In her eagerness to get away from Cymbeline's palace and in her joy at the thought of finding

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *R.E.S.* xix. 359, *M.L.Q.* vii. 61, and H. C. Wyld, *History of Modern Colloquial English* (Oxford, 1936), pp. 294 ff. Note also Spenser's quibble on *Somerset* and *Somersheat* in *Prothalamium* 67.

<sup>2</sup> Although Richmond Noble [*Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge* (London, 1935), p. 244] asserts that 'the play's scriptural interest is not large', it is a noteworthy fact, nevertheless, that relatively and absolutely the word *blessed* (*blest*) is more frequent in *Cymbeline* than in any other Shakespeare play. Note particularly 'Blessed be those / How mean soe'er, that have their honest wills' (I. vi. 7-8), an indubitable echo, and 'O blessed that I might not!' (I. i. 139); 'Blessed live you long' (I. vi. 159); 'Do your best wills, / And make me blest to obey!' (v. i. 16-17); 'Blest pray you be, / That . . . / You may reign in them now!' (v. v. 370-2); and further, IV. ii. 206, IV. iv. 42, v. iv. 117, and v. v. 478. One cannot escape the conclusion that for some reason or other the words of the Sermon on the Mount kept coming back to Shakespeare when he wrote *Cymbeline*.

her husband at the little Welsh seaport of Milford Haven, she derives comfort and inspiration even from the prosaic name-element *Haven*. To her it becomes charged with emotionally rich overtones: refuge, haven of bliss, paradise, or heaven. Indeed, *Haven* is a very apt word, for it lends itself to a quibble on *heaven*. Both words were, or could be, homonyms in Shakespeare's time. *Haven* was pronounced [hɛ:vən], and *heaven*, which goes back to ME. *hēven*, still had the old pronunciation with a long vowel [hɛ:vən], and besides, the shortened variant [hɛvən], which is now the current form in Standard English. Shakespeare rhymes *heaven* and *even* (adj. and subst.) in *AYLI* v. iv. 114, in the *Sonnets* 28.10, 132.5, and in *Venus and Adonis* 493. *The Writing Scholar's Companion* (1695) couples *haven* and *heaven* as being pronounced alike (p. 93). Hence I am convinced that we have here a deliberate play on *haven* and *heaven*.

#### IV. *The Anchor is Deep*

In the quibbling scene in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where Falstaff is telling his followers Pistol and Nym of his designs on Mrs. Ford, he certainly indulges in a bit of wishful thinking with regard to the impression he has made on her (i. iii. 50-4): 'I can construe the action of her familiar stile, & the hardest voice of her behavior (to be english'd rightly) is, *I am Sir John Falstafs*.'

This metaphor-laden harangue is echoed in Pistol's rather obscure aside to Nym (II. 54-6): 'He hath studied her will; and translated her will: out of honesty into English', to which Nym replies equally enigmatically: 'The Anchor is deepe: will that humour passe?'

These last few words, which do not occur in the First Quarto of 1602, have been variously interpreted, though anything but successfully. Dr. Johnson's suggestion that they be removed from their present place and instead inserted after l. 90 ('Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hailstones, go!') need not be taken seriously, nor another brain-wave of his, namely, the emendation of *anchor* to *author*. H. C. Hart<sup>1</sup> argues that 'what Nym says amounts to an acceptance of Falstaff's scheme; the plan is firmly fixed'. Feeling that there is perhaps also some hidden meaning or allusion in Nym's words, he wonders whether Nym does not jocularly call Falstaff, 'with a possible reference to *Sir John*, a by-name for a clergyman, an "anchor", i.e. hermit, "the deep old rascal"': in an attempt to forestall adverse criticism of this suggestion he adds the pertinent observation that 'there are worse and more far-fetched puns than this in Shakespeare'. G. van Santvoord,<sup>2</sup> following Malone (1790), paraphrases Nym's speech:

<sup>1</sup> *The Arden Shakespeare, The Merry Wives of Windsor* (London, 1904), p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *The Yale Shakespeare, The Merry Wives of Windsor* (New Haven, 1922), p. 112.

'The scheme for debauching Ford's wife is deep.' And Dover Wilson finds Kinnear's (1883) conjectural emendation 'angle' for *anchor* 'attractive' in view of 'English' (l. 55), 'angels' (l. 60), and 'the humour rises' (l. 63). Nevertheless, he suggests the alternative explanation that *anchor* was 'a player's makeshift for a word he could not read', and refers to his theory of the relationship between Q 1 and F.<sup>1</sup>

All this is very unsatisfactory and confusing. The meaning of the word *anchor* has not been explained at all, not even if one were to admit the plausibility of the quibble on *anchor*, hermit, which I am not willing to do. Kinnear's emendation to *angle* is inexcusable, and even more so the suggested parallelism of *angle*, *English*, and *angels*. The solution to the problem is, indeed, simple enough. *Anchor* is merely a variant spelling of the word *anker*, wine-keg, of Dutch or German origin (*O.E.D.*). Even though *anker* has not yet been found earlier than 1597, and then in the secondary meaning of 'a dry measure of capacity' (the earliest instance of the original sense, 'a measure of wine and spirit', dates from 1673), we are fully justified in assuming that in Shakespeare's day it was a familiar term in tavern jargon, one that men like Falstaff, Pistol, and Nym would have heard and used more than once. Consequently Nym's use of it here, with obvious reference to Falstaff: 'That wine-keg is profound', neatly parallels other terms of this kind applied to Falstaff, e.g. by the Prince in *1 Henry IV* (II. iv. 494 ff.): 'a tun of man', 'that trunk of humours', 'that huge bombard of sack', &c. If it could be proved that the noun *hanker* existed at that time (according to *O.E.D.* the corresponding verb does not seem to be known before 1600, and the noun is first recorded in 1827), a pun on that word would give added spice to Nym's disrespectful remark.

#### V. Hawk and Handsaw

The two words *hawk* and *handsaw*, which are juxtaposed and contrasted in Hamlet's much-discussed statement (II. ii. 396-7):

'I am but mad North, North-West: when the Winde is Southerly I know a Hawke from a Handsaw,'

have had more than their share of comment and speculation. In the Variorum Edition of 1877 a whole page was needed to summarize what earlier editors had suggested as the likely interpretation. Hanmer (1744) wished to emend *handsaw* to *hernshaw*, and Warburton (1747) was of the same opinion. Nares (1822) said that 'to know a hawk from a hernshaw' was certainly the original form of the proverb, adding that the 'corruption' had taken place before the time of Shakespeare, for in Ray's *Proverbs* of 1768

<sup>1</sup> *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1921), p. 107.

the word appears as *handsaw*. The Clarendon edition (1872) referred to the pronunciation of *hernsew* in Suffolk and Norfolk as *harnsa*, which is only a step removed from *handsaw*, and appended an elaborate account of the flight of herons (usually with the wind) to account for the word *southerly*. The Variorum editor felt inclined to accept this interpretation, provided *handsaw* were a 'corruption' of *hernsew*.<sup>1</sup>

For the next fifty odd years this identification of *handsaw* and *heronsew*, linguistically unsupported though it was, appeared to be taken more or less for granted. *O.E.D.* recorded the Hamlet quotation as a separate entry under *hand-saw* (a saw managed by one hand) with the appended note that it 'is generally explained as a corruption of *heronshaw* or *hernsew*, dial. *harnsa*, heron', and that 'no other instances of the phrase (except as quotations from Shakespeare) have been found': yet nobody ever attempted to explain how OF. *heronceau*, ME. *heronsew*, could have been 'corrupted' to *handsaw*. In 1934 Dover Wilson<sup>2</sup> decided that *handsaw* was not a corruption of *hernshaw*, giving as his only reason for this pronouncement that 'the word, occurring in both Q 2 and F 1, is textually very strong, and must be accepted as it stands'. This argument, based exclusively on the written form of the word, was supported by a reference to Ray (who actually took his proverb from Shakespeare) and to such an eminent Shakespeare authority as 'Mr. J. A. Barlow, then of the Ministry of Labour', who in 1924 had privately suggested to Dover Wilson that *hawk* should be interpreted as 'a plasterer's mortar-board, still in everyday use under that name'. After a polite bow to Dowden, who had anticipated this suggestion, Dover Wilson reasserted his opinion that *handsaw* was not a corruption of *hernshaw*, though 'it is certainly a quibble upon it, since the whole passage (as all have noted) can be readily understood in terms of falconry. Hawking at herons was a favourite sport; and a north wind driving the two birds towards the south, i.e. into the sun, would make it difficult to distinguish between them at a distance despite their difference in size (v. Clar. note, and Madden, pp. 206-7). Thus Hamlet also implies that he has "an eye of" his seeming friends and knows them to be birds of prey.' Dover Wilson does not explain how his readers are to resolve this dichotomy: *handsaw* is not a corruption of *hernshaw*, yet *handsaw* is a 'pregnant' quibble on *hernshaw*.

Five years later Kittredge had to face the same textual problem when publishing his annotated edition of *Hamlet*. He resorted to the expedient of hedging, leaving it to his readers to settle the matter as best they could: 'Some think the proverb was taken from the sport of falconry and was

<sup>1</sup> *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare. The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, ed. H. H. Furness (Philadelphia and London, 1877), pp. 170-1.

<sup>2</sup> *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, ed. John Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1934), p. 179.

originally "to know a hawk (i.e., a falcon) from a *hernshaw* (a heron)"; but it has not been found in that form, and the corruption, if there be one, is probably older than Shakespeare's time.<sup>1</sup> Kittredge might well have added this significant parallel from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (IV. 412-13): 'Ech for his vertu holden is for deere, / Both heroner and faucon for ryvere.'

Then in 1941 Haldeen Braddy reopened the discussion by publishing in *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin* of January that year an article entitled, 'I Know a Hawk from a Handsaw.' In this Braddy rejects Hanmer's suggestion to emend *handsaw* to *heronshaw*, adding the superfluous comment that 'the words *handsaw* and *heronshaw* appear to be without any etymological relation whatever' (as if that fact would preclude the phonetic identity of the two written forms!). He then quotes some old saws which he thinks are analogous, though in fact only one of his ten instances is relevant, viz. 'He don't know a hog from a side-saddle.' For, strange to say, Braddy takes *hawk* and *handsaw* at their face value and ignores such an excellent modern parallel as 'he doesn't know a woodcock from a turkey'. And he sees a subtle connexion between the word *handsaw* (the cue for Polonius to enter) and Hamlet's derisive interruption, 'Buzz, buzz!' (I. 412): 'In stating that "I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw", Hamlet would appear to imply that he was not as stupid as his auditors seemed to believe, that when their subterfuges were so baldly plain, he at least could detect a spying *hawk* from an old man as full of "buzzes" as a *handsaw*.'

This is as ingenious as some of Empson's fantastic Chaucer interpretations, and as implausible. Hamlet had just let drop a casual remark concerning his supposed madness when Polonius entered; couched in the form of a proverbial expression, this remark merely said, 'I have still some common sense and discrimination.'<sup>1</sup> Nothing in the text warrants the assumption that its last word, *handsaw*, was meant as a gibe at Polonius. On the contrary, immediately after the old man's deferential greeting, Hamlet calls him 'that great baby . . . not yet out of his swaddling clouts', a characterization that is then elaborated by Rosencrantz. There is not the slightest reason for connecting *handsaw*, itself part of an alliterative phrase, with the interjection *buzz*, meaning 'idle talk, chatter' and appearing seven speeches later, none of which, moreover, continues the metaphor of the *handsaw*. Why should we not take the expression *to know a hawk from a handsaw* for what it really is, a metaphor from falconry? No difficulty whatever is involved in proving it as such, provided we realize that this is a phonological problem pure and simple. After all, *handsaw* is merely

<sup>1</sup> *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, ed. G. L. Kittredge (Boston, 1939), p. 193.

a spelling, one that, unfortunately, speaks more directly to the eye than to the ear. Yet this spelling is a much less imperfect rendering of the sound-group used by Shakespeare and his contemporaries—and even to-day by many dialect-speakers—to designate the young heron than the traditional form *heronshaw*. At the same time we should remember that *handsaw* is not a 'corruption' of *heronshaw* or *herons(h)ew*; it is simply the regular development in certain regional dialects of late ME. *heronsaw* < OF. *heronceau*. If there is any corruption at all, it is in the spelling: its excrescent *d*, which was doubtless never pronounced (cf. modern *handsome*), is due to popular etymology like the change of OF. *crevice* into *crayfish*.

The development of OF. *heronceau*, via ME. *heronsew*, to *herons(h)ew* or *heronshaw* is an interesting phonological problem. Let us first trace the history of its final syllable *-ceau*. The more common development was for OF. *eau* to become ME. *eu* as in *beauty*; this reduction of *eau* to *eu* implies that the first component of the triphthong was stressed (*éau*) and that consequently the medial *a* was so weakly enunciated as to disappear altogether.<sup>1</sup> Before a labial consonant or [f] and [tʃ] this ME. *eu* was further reduced to *ē* as in *Bemont* (< *beau mond*), *Beacham* or *Beauchamp*, and *Beachy Head* (< *beau chef* + explanatory *head*).<sup>2</sup> When fully stressed, ME. *eu* of French or native origin became [ju:] in modern Standard English but various other diphthongs and triphthongs in the dialects—see, for example, *beauty*, *dew*, *few* in Wright, *E.D.Gr.*, Index. However, since ME. *eu* in *herons(h)ew* was unstressed or only weakly stressed, the syllable *-sew* was liable to reduction. Thus [sju:] would become either [sju] or through assibilation [ʃu], reflected in such early spellings as *heronsue*, *heronshew*, *heronshoe*. In colloquial speech, however, the reduction of the final syllable *-sew* went still further: it became [sə], spelled *-sa* in *harnsa*—cf. the vulgar and dialectal development of unstressed *-ue* in *value* to [ɪ] and [ə].<sup>3</sup>

These changes occurred only if a word containing OF. *eau* was borrowed early into English, i.e. before the reduction in OF. of *eau* to *au*. The latter change, which began in the west of France in the twelfth century and had reached the middle of the country in the fourteenth, was completed in the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> When introduced into English this new OF. diphthong *au* fell together with ME. *au* of other origin, sharing its development to modern [ɔ:]. The word *bawcock* (< *beau coq*) and such an early form as *bawshere* (by the side of *beshere* and *bewshere*) for *beausire* reveal the effect of this OF. reduction of *eau*.<sup>5</sup> So does Shakespeare's *handsaw*, where *-saw*

<sup>1</sup> Richard Jordan, *Handbuch der mittelhochdeutschen Grammatik* (Heidelberg, 1925), § 243.

<sup>2</sup> *The Place-Names of Sussex* [Engl. Place-Name Soc. (Cambridge, 1930), vii. 427].

<sup>3</sup> Cf. H. Kökeritz, op. cit., § 163, and J. Wright, *E.D.Gr.*, Index.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer-Lübke, *Historische Grammatik der französischen Sprache* (Heidelberg, 1934), i, § 143.

<sup>5</sup> Our ME. grammars have nothing to say about this later development of OF. *eau*.



represents the weakly stressed syllable [sɔ]. The development of the variant form *-shaw* may be due to a contamination of this *-saw* and the above-mentioned *-shew*, but I prefer to regard it as a regular sound-change of the same kind as in the sixteenth-century form *Porchmouth* for *Portsmouth* and the Isle of Wight place-name *Porchfield*.<sup>1</sup> In those areas of England where *r* was a retroflex (or inverted) consonant, as it still is, e.g. in the south and south-west, assimilation would naturally cause a following *n* and *s* to become retroflex, too; in other words, the consonantal group [rns] with a retroflex *r* [ɾ] in *hernsaw* would become [ɾɳʃ], i.e. *hernshaw*.<sup>2</sup>

Having thus cleared up the development of the final syllable *-ceau*, we can now turn our attention to the first part of the word. In the trisyllabic ME. form *heronsew*, *heronsaw*, the medial vowel was commonly syncopated, and the resulting *hernsew*, *hernsaw* was changed into *harnsew*, *harnsaw* by the same process as gave us *dark*, *heart* from ME. *derk*, *herte*. It is the form *harnsew* that survives in East Anglian [hɑ:nsɪ, hæ:nsɔ], spelled variously *hahnsey*, *harnsey*, *hahnser*, *hancer*, *hansa*,<sup>3</sup> here the final syllable has been reduced to [sɪ] or [sɔ] as shown above. If the *r* was lost early in the difficult consonantal combination *rns*,<sup>4</sup> the outcome would be [hænsɔ] or, with the variant final syllable [sɔ], [hænsɔ], that is, *handsaw* as it is spelt, for example, in *A Glossary of North Country Words* (1846—see *E.D.D.*) and in the above passage from *Hamlet*. The same development would, of course, take place in those dialects where ME. *ar*+cons. became [æ:] through a later loss of *r*. The fact that popular etymology could change the spelling *hernsaw* to *handsaw* (obviously via *hansaw*) shows that owing to the radical sound-changes the word was no longer felt as a derivative of *heron*; since the latter word usually remained a dissyllable, its *er* was not changed to *ar*. But we may rest assured that the term *han(d)saw*, young *heron*, was as familiar to Shakespeare as is *ha(h)nser* to a Suffolk or Norfolk man to-day.

The proverbial expression *to know a hawk from a handsaw* must have been coined in the heyday of falconry, that is, probably six hundred years ago, if not more. Shakespeare had a first-hand knowledge of hawking, and

Still later, when OF. (e)au had been changed to [o:], this sound was rendered by early NE. [o:], which has given modern [ov] as in *beau* [boʊ], *hautboy* [houbɔɪ]. This threefold development of OF. *eau* in English so as to coalesce with ME. *eu*, *au*, and *o*, is of great chronological interest.

<sup>1</sup> See H. Kökeritz, *The Place-Names of the Isle of Wight* (Uppsala, 1940), p. civ.

<sup>2</sup> The corresponding [ʃ] in *bawshere* had a different history; it must be due to the assimilation of [ʃɪ] or [ʃɔ] in the ME. form of OF. *siew*, the oblique case of OF. *sire*.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Edward Moor, *Suffolk Words and Phrases* (Woodbridge, 1823), p. 161, and J. Wright, *E.D.D.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the identical early loss of *r* in *partner*, *partridge* in the Suffolk dialect and elsewhere—see H. Kökeritz, *The Phonology of the Suffolk Dialect*, § 316, and Mather Flint on *Early Eighteenth-Century English Pronunciation* (Uppsala, 1944), p. 156.

*Hamlet* contains no less than twenty-two images relating to sport and games, of those three from falconry (*checking, pitch, French falconers*).<sup>1</sup> Even if it could be shown that *hawk* meaning 'mortal-board' did exist in Shakespeare's time, which does not seem improbable although the word is not recorded until 1700 in *O.E.D.*, its mere existence would not warrant the postulation of a trade-slang expression *to know a hawk from a handsaw*. And suppose, for the sake of argument, that such a phrase had actually developed, we should then be compelled to show convincingly that it had found its way into common parlance and, what would be infinitely more difficult, that it could make sense when combined with a reference to the direction of the wind (as in the *Hamlet* quotation). The burden of proof would consequently rest on those who insist on a modern, literal interpretation of *hawk* and *handsaw*. On the other hand, we know from numerous sources that herons were regularly hunted with falcons. *Heroner*, now obsolete, was once the term for a falcon trained to fly at a heron (*O.E.D.*); it was used by Chaucer in *Troilus and Criseyde*, IV. 413 (quoted above) and in the *Legend of Good Women*, l. 120: 'Ne gentil hawtein faucoun heroner'. From 1575 and 1599 *O.E.D.* cites the following two examples of the word: 'The facon gentle . . . is a very good hearoner', and 'But this "heroner", is an especiall hawke . . . of more accompte then other hawkes are, because the flight of the Herone ys moore dangerous then of other fowles'. In 1611 Cotgrave defines *Faulcon haironnier* as 'a herner, a faulcon made onely to the heron'. And from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (VI. vii. 9) comes finally this pertinent quotation: 'As when a cast of Faulcons make their flight / At an Herneshaw, that lyes aloft on wing.' The combined phonological and historical evidence here adduced should convince even the most sceptical mind that the only plausible interpretation of Hamlet's expression *I know a hawk from a handsaw* is: 'I can distinguish a falcon from a heronsew.' In modern editions of *Hamlet* the *handsaw* should therefore be spelt *hernsaw* or *heronsew*, a perfectly legitimate and appropriate change or emendation that would, I think, put an end to further speculation on the meaning of the phrase.

<sup>1</sup> Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* (New York and Cambridge, 1935), pp. 32, 368.

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## TIMON OF ATHENS: THE DISRUPTION OF FEUDAL MORALITY

By E. C. PETTET

*One business does command us all; for mine  
Is money.*

*Timon of Athens*, III. iv. 4-5.

UNDERNEATH its enduring elements of pure entertainment, its love-interest, and its fairy-tale, the *Merchant of Venice* contains at least one serious theme arising directly out of the life and thought of the period in which it was written. This theme is not the wickedness of Jews but the wickedness of usury,<sup>1</sup> particularly as it 'defaceth chivalries, beateth down nobility'.<sup>2</sup>

Had this play been Shakespeare's last word on the subject, we should be forced to admit that his attitude was much too optimistic. To be sure, the *Merchant of Venice* has much incisive comment on the usury question; but while in real life usury and the embryonic forms of capitalism of which it was a part were shattering the whole fabric of medieval ideas and institutions from top to bottom, in the play Bassanio, Antonio, and Portia, who represent the old feudal ideals of bounty, open-handed generosity, and mutual service, score a much too easy and resounding triumph over the new spirit of the cash-nexus and the 'hardness of heart'<sup>3</sup> against which conservative writers like Wilson were fulminating. But the *Merchant of Venice* is not Shakespeare's last word on the subject. Ten years later he returned to it in *Timon of Athens*,<sup>4</sup> and here it is his chief theme, treated with an unambiguous directness, elaboration, and wealth of detail. Stripped of its flimsy Athenian trappings, *Timon* is a straightforward tract for the times,<sup>5</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> See my study of '*The Merchant of Venice*', *Essays and Studies*, vol. xxxi.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Wilson, *Discourse upon Usury*, ed. R. H. Tawney (London, 1925), p. 336. This book is described by R. H. Tawney [*Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London, 1938), p. 150] as the most elaborate treatise on the subject of usury produced in the Elizabethan period.

<sup>3</sup> Wilson, op. cit., p. 177: 'And what should this mean, that, instead of charitable dealing, and the use of alms (for lending is a spice thereof), hardness of heart hath now gotten place, and greedy gain is chiefly followed, and horrible extortion commonly used?'

<sup>4</sup> Like Professor Ellis-Fermor (see *R.E.S.* xviii, No. 71) I believe that *Timon* is all Shakespeare's work, though much of it may be unrevised or unfinished.

<sup>5</sup> No doubt this fact helps to explain why *Timon* fails as a play. But, as at least some critics have realized, *Timon* has sufficient merit to deserve attention. Hazlitt has the rather surprising remark that 'Shakespeare is in earnest throughout only in *Timon*, *Macbeth* and *Lear*', while Swinburne once described the piece as a 'sublime and enigmatic fragment of a poem which rises from the social satire of an observant cynic into the raging rapture of an infuriated prophet'. In direct opposition to these opinions we may cite the view of a modern Shakespearean critic, M. R. Ridley: 'I do not think that one can with any profit spend much time over this play' [*Shakespeare's Plays* (London, 1937), p. 197].

on this occasion no one can accuse Shakespeare of looking at his world through rose-coloured spectacles.

To appreciate the real significance of the play it is essential for us to understand something of the economic plight of those feudal lords who, with their heirs, relatives, and dependants, were the most influential patrons of the Elizabethan stage.<sup>1</sup> As a class these feudalists had been severely hit by the sharp rise in prices throughout the century, for while the bulk of their income was derived from the land, rents often remained at a relatively low, customary level. Some were shrewd enough to turn their attention to mining and industry;<sup>2</sup> others attempted to reorganize their estates and screw up the level of rents. But these entrepreneurs and 'improving' landlords were the exceptions, and most of the nobility, lacking either the energy and initiative or the ruthlessness to adopt other measures, had recourse to the only other way out of their difficulty—the money-lender. The results of this were what we should expect: by the end of the sixteenth century many landowners, including some of the greatest noblemen in the country,<sup>3</sup> were in debt to thousands of pounds, while a considerable amount of land had fallen, through mortgage, into the hands of City merchants, tradesmen, and lawyers.

There was also another important factor, also relevant to *Timon*, that considerably aggravated the financial difficulties of these noblemen and gentry of the old type. When we come across such a sentence in Wilson as 'I will not say but this gentleman was an unthrift divers ways in good cheer . . . in wearing gay and costly apparel, in roystering with many servants more than needed, and with mustering in monstrous great house, in haunting evil company, and lashing out fondly and wastefully at cards and dice, as time served',<sup>4</sup> we may be tempted to pass over it as commonplace condemnation of the traditionally spendthrift ways of the wealthy or as a sensible piece of advice justified by the conditions of the time. But the issue is not quite such a simple one as that, for if 'haunting evil company' might be laid to the charge of an aristocrat from any place or time, and if 'lashing out . . . at cards and dice' was a typically Elizabethan vice, the reference to a superfluity of servants and 'mustering in monstrous great house' must be fitted into a different context. This context is feudalism where religious and moral precept imposed upon all lords the obligation of 'bounty' or 'housekeeping'—a duty that included, along with a large house and a numerous retinue of servants, hospitality, charity, and patronage

<sup>1</sup> Apart, of course, from the Court.

<sup>2</sup> See Tawney's Introduction to the *Discourse on Usury*, pp. 52-4.

<sup>3</sup> Tawney's Introduction (*ibid.*, pp. 32-3) also furnishes a complete list of these, including Shakespeare's own patron, the Earl of Southampton, who had at one time surrendered his estates to creditors and 'scarce knows what course to take to live'.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

of all kinds. 'The ideal country gentleman of the time was a man who lived in his own manor house, helped to defend the country from attacks from without and to repress disorders within, kept up a liberal but not wasteful household, entertained his friends, provided for his dependants and gave from his abundance to the relief of his poor neighbours.'<sup>1</sup> So, in his elegy to Sir Christopher Hatton, Robert Greene singles it out as worthy of poetic record that the good knight

kept no Christmas house for once a year,  
Each day his boards were filled with lordly fare:  
He fed a rout of yeomen with his cheer,  
Nor was his bread and beef kept in with care,  
His wine and beer to strangers were not spare,  
And yet beside to all that hunger grieved,  
His gates were ope, and they were there relieved.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, while from one side the Elizabethan gentry were being warned to cut down their traditional generosity and display<sup>3</sup> if they wished to keep out of the clutches of money-lenders, on the other side they were under a fire of complaint that the old custom of housekeeping was falling into decay. Wilson himself, in sketching a gloomy picture of a society wholly given over to the practice of usury, slips in a protest against contemporary landlords who fail in their duties of housekeeping: 'And amongst others, the gentleman will no more profess arms nor chivalry to advance his welfare, but selling his lands will have double gain by his money, and so give over housekeeping altogether, taking a chamber in London or elsewhere instead of a house in his own country, *as we see they do now commonly*, the more is the pity, and the greater is their shame.'<sup>4</sup>

Setting Shakespeare's Timon against this real-life social background, we cannot be satisfied with the common and superficial view that regards him as a mere abstract type of the prodigal or imagine that we have him exactly characterized by the words of one of his cynical creditors:

If I want gold, steal but a beggar's dog  
And give it Timon, why, the dog coins gold;  
If I would sell my horse, and buy twenty moe  
Better than he, why, give my horse to Timon;  
Ask nothing, give it him, it foals me, straight,

<sup>1</sup> E. P. Cheyney, *History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth* (New York, 1926), ch. 25.

<sup>2</sup> 'A Maiden's Dream' [*Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*, ed. Churton Collins (Oxford, 1905)].

<sup>3</sup> A further drain on the purses of many Elizabethan noblemen was attendance at a very costly and extravagant Court. See Cheyney, *op. cit.*, ch. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Discourse Upon Usury*, p. 366.

And able horses: no porter at his gate,  
But rather one that smiles and still invites  
All that pass by.<sup>1</sup>

There is, of course, truth in this description: Timon is extravagantly and fantastically generous, even when measured against the feudal ideal. His household is wasteful as well as liberal, and he has been stupidly negligent in the management of his financial affairs. Nor is there any doubt that Shakespeare intends us to regard his conduct as blameworthy, for several times he puts into the mouth of Flavius, the one admirable character in the play, strong condemnation of Timon's conduct:

No care, no stop! so senseless of expense,  
That he will neither know how to maintain it,  
Nor cease his flow of riot.<sup>2</sup>

But we must allow something for the necessary grand gestures and high colouring of drama, and essentially Timon is a portrait of the ideal feudal lord living up to the full obligation of bounty and housekeeping. Shakespeare strikes this note in the first few lines of the play where the Poet rhapsodizes:

See,  
Magic of bounty! all these spirits thy power  
Hath conjur'd to attend;<sup>3</sup>

and throughout the whole of the first Act we are treated to a spectacle of Timon's lavish feudal bounty.<sup>4</sup> He is the patron of poets and painters; he stands in a patriarchal relation to his servants and instantly makes Lucilius a handsome money-present when it is a question of smoothing his marriage with the daughter of a thrifty Athenian bourgeois; and the entire second scene is devoted to feasting and entertainment in which Timon offers costly presents to his friends:

Methinks I could deal kingdoms to my friends,  
And ne'er be weary.<sup>5</sup>

We also learn later that his 'sword and fortune' had always been at the disposal of the State when it was attacked by foreign enemies.

<sup>1</sup> *Timon*, II. i. 5-12. (All the text references in this essay are taken from the 'Arden' *Timon of Athens*, ed. K. Deighton.)

<sup>2</sup> II. ii. 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> I. i. 5-7.

<sup>4</sup> No doubt many of the recipients of Timon's bounty are undeserving of it, but I must completely dissent from Professor Ellis-Fermor's opinion that the opening part of the play 'discloses subtly the deep and penetrating corruption that his wealth has bred' (*R.E.S.* xviii, No. 71).

<sup>5</sup> I. ii. 228 f.

This side of Timon reminds us somewhat of Bassanio; but he is something of Antonio, too, embodying several important values of feudal morality besides bounty. Like Antonio, he believes, for instance, in free loans as an act of charity,<sup>1</sup> and when he hears that his friend Ventidius has been imprisoned for debt, he opens his purse as swiftly as Antonio was prepared to open his for Bassanio. For him there is 'a bond in men',<sup>2</sup> and when the released Ventidius offers to repay him, he will not recover even his principal, let alone exact a 'breed of barren metal':<sup>3</sup>

I gave it freely ever; and there's none  
Can truly say he gives, if he receives:  
If our betters play at that game, we must not dare  
To imitate them; faults that are rich are fair.<sup>4</sup>

More significantly, perhaps, this feudal ethos represented in Timon is brought out by his interview with the old Athenian and his speech on friendship. In the first episode<sup>5</sup> an old Athenian lodges a complaint against Timon's servant Lucilius, who, penniless as he is, is aspiring to the hand of his daughter. This Athenian belongs by candid confession ('I am a man That from my first have been inclined to thrift') to the new cash-nexus world of Shylock, and, having brought his daughter up in an expensive style, he makes it plain in a horsedealer's speech that he is aiming at a wealthy marriage for her. His blunt request is that Timon should forbid Lucilius the girl's company. Timon, however, out of gratitude for Lucilius' past service, decides to present him with a sum equivalent to the girl's dowry, and prevails on the old man to accept Lucilius as his prospective son-in-law. Such an act of generosity is striking enough and would hardly have been introduced by Shakespeare had he intended Timon to be nothing more than a senseless prodigal. But possibly even more impressive is the clash of values brought out in the dialogue between Timon and the old man: for the Athenian his daughter's marriage is a mere financial transaction, with the financial threat of disinheritance hung over the girl's head if she dares to disobey him; for Timon, on the other hand, it is the plain human relationship that counts—a simple, direct issue that is reflected by

<sup>1</sup> This was a key-point in the propaganda against usury. It was maintained that usury was clean contrary to the essential Christian act of free lending. If Wilson's thesis can be reduced to a single sentence it is to be found in the following statement (p. 230): 'I say and maintain it constantly that all lending in respect of time for any gain, be it never so little, is usury, and so wickedness before God and man, and a damnable deed in itself, because we are commanded to lend freely, and to look for nothing over and above that we lend.'

<sup>2</sup> I. i. 146.

<sup>3</sup> *Merchant of Venice*, I. iii. 135. (Apart from *Timon*, all references are from the 'Globe' Edition.)

<sup>4</sup> I. ii. 10-13. There is a slight difficulty here. Shakespeare himself must be commenting in these lines since Timon has no 'betters'. What Shakespeare appears to be expressing thus indirectly is a regret that his 'betters' fail sometimes to live up to Timon's ideal.

<sup>5</sup> I. i. 113-53.

the brevity of three curt sentences, probing (for him) the quick of the matter:

*Old Athenian.* This man of thine  
Attempts her love: I prithee, noble lord,  
Join with me to forbid him her resort;  
Myself have spoke in vain.

*Timon.* The man is honest.

*Old Athenian.* Therefore let well be; Timon, his honesty  
Rewards him in itself; it must not bear  
My daughter.

*Timon.* Does she love him?

*Old Athenian.* She is young and apt;  
Our own precedent passions do instruct us  
What levity's in youth.

*Timon* (to Lucilius). Love you the maid?<sup>1</sup>

Honesty, love, and mutual love—these are real and important values for Timon,<sup>2</sup> part of the 'plain dealing' that Apemantus finds so lamentably lacking in the contemporary world; for the old Athenian they are irrelevant to overriding financial considerations, and his passing lip-service to Lucilius' honesty, which must be its own not very profitable reward, suggests that for him, as for Shylock, goodness is synonymous with affluence:

*Shylock.* Antonio is a good man.

*Bassanio.* Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

*Shylock.* Oh, no, no, no, no; my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient.<sup>3</sup>

Timon's speech on friendship, delivered while he is entertaining his friends, has such an important bearing on the main theme of the play that it deserves extensive quotation:

O you Gods! think I, what need we have any friends, if we should ne'er have need of 'em! they were the most needless creatures living should we ne'er have use of 'em, and would most resemble sweet instruments hung up in cases, that keep their sounds to themselves. Why, I have often wished myself poorer that

<sup>1</sup> I. i. 128-36.

<sup>2</sup> There is, admittedly, a high degree of idealization in Timon's attitude here, which is probably a reflection of Shakespeare's own humanity. For all the cult of courtly and romantic love, marriage in feudal society was always a matter of economics. And there is no reason to believe that love-marriages were any more common in the Elizabethan period. 'So far as can be discovered, the proportion of economic marriages increased in the sixteenth century, when the merchant was anxious to be allied to blue blood, and the needy gentleman was anxious to be allied to money' [L. C. Knights, *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (London, 1937), p. 125]. However, Timon's attitude is in consonance with the medieval ideals of human relationship, and this attitude is thrown into sharp contrast with a typically bourgeois and mercenary one.

<sup>3</sup> *Merchant of Venice*, I. iii. 12-17.



I might come nearer to you. We are born to do benefits; and what better or properer can we call our own than the riches of our friends? O! what a precious comfort 'tis, to have so many, like brothers, commanding one another's fortunes.<sup>1</sup>

This speech furnishes us with a vital point of reference that we must never overlook in our interpretations of the play. Whatever doubts we may have about the authorship of some passages, these sentences are indubitably Shakespeare. More than that, they breathe the warm-hearted friendliness and generosity of Shakespeare's own personality. At the same time all the beliefs expressed in the speech—service and responsibility, class solidarity, the social nature of good<sup>2</sup>—are medieval beliefs and probably derive to some extent from traditional moral teaching. This and the fact that they are given to Timon to proclaim should be sufficient to explode the misconception of him as a blind prodigal who has only himself to blame for all the suffering that later befalls him.<sup>3</sup> He may, as he himself admits, have given unwisely; he has never given ignobly:

No villainous bounty yet hath passed my heart;  
Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given.<sup>4</sup>

It is not merely Timon's bounty, the subject of the first Act, that links him, if as an ideal projection, with the flesh-and-blood gentry of Shakespeare's own time. Like theirs, his wealth is in land; like them, too, he has been able to keep up a lavish scale of bounty only by mortgaging his estates to the last acre. And when disaster overtakes him it is not the fairy-tale disaster of Antonio and Bassanio, but the real disaster that hung over the heads of so many of the Elizabethan upper class: he has mortgaged his lands to the point when he has nothing further to mortgage, and at

<sup>1</sup> *Timon*, I. ii. 97-109. It is interesting to compare the sentiments in this speech with the individualism of the Merchant and the Lawyer in Wilson's *Discourse*, p. 207. *Merchant*: 'I had rather have of my own than borrow of another man, and I do not know what need I may have another day. Store, sir, is no sore.' *Lawyer*: 'By my small honesty, sir, you do wisely to be your own friend, and to live so that you need not the help of another.'

<sup>2</sup> For further expressions in Shakespeare of the social nature of good, see the Duke's speech in *Measure for Measure* (I. i): 'Heaven doth with us as we with torches do', and the discussion in *Troilus and Cressida* (III. iii) between Achilles and Ulysses.

<sup>3</sup> F. S. Boas, for instance, in *Shakspeare and his Predecessors* (London, 1940), p. 497, condemns Timon for 'lax idealism', and passes this judgement immediately after a quotation from the friendship speech. But it is Timon's handling of his business affairs that is lax rather than his idealism, and while he is to be blamed, he is also to be pitied. P. Alexander [*Shakespeare's Life and Art* (London, 1939), p. 184] is much nearer the truth when he writes: 'To say that Timon took his trouble too much to heart is just what the senators said of the soldier; and the criticism that finds in his untimely death a judgement on his "kindly self-indulgence" or "easy generosity" is exactly in the senatorial vein.' Surely we are intended to take the First Stranger's praise of Timon's 'right noble mind, illustrious virtue, and honourable carriage' (III. ii. 86-7) as choric and approving comment?

<sup>4</sup> II. ii. 178-9.

last the City men, Athenian senators, usurers, and merchants, begin to press energetically for payment and satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

At first he is magnificently unperturbed, in spite of the foretaste of what is later and generally to happen when Flavius reports that the Senate refuse to come to his assistance. All his chief friends, Lucius, Lucullus, Sempronius, and Ventidius, are men of means, and he is confident they will help him, nay, even glad of the opportunity to call upon their generosity:

And, in some sort, these wants of mine are crown'd  
That I account them blessings; for by these  
Shall I try friends. You shall perceive how you  
Mistake my fortunes: I am wealthy in my friends.<sup>2</sup>

The rest of the story—the falling away of Timon's 'trencher-friends', his retreat to a brutish, hermit life on the seashore, his death, and the victorious rebellion of Alcibiades against the Athenian Senate, with its promise of a better social order where

Each  
Prescribe to other as each other's leech<sup>3</sup>

is not particularly interesting and certainly deficient in dramatic effect. What gives the last part of the play its power is Timon's long and furious denunciations of grasping, animal humanity.

Now these tirades of Timon have become a byword for rancour, spleen, and *saeva indignatio*:

Grant me an old man's frenzy,  
Myself must I remake  
Till I am Timon and Lear,  
Or that William Blake  
Who beat upon the wall  
Till Truth obeyed his call.<sup>4</sup>

In the narrower field of Shakespearian criticism the tendency has been to explain these outbursts as the outcry of an extravagant, distorted misanthrope—and, of course, Timon applies this label to himself—awakened too late to a realization of 'man's ingratitude'; and this explanation has often been plausibly reinforced by the suggestion that Shakespeare himself was still in the black depression of his tragic period and had lost all grip of

<sup>1</sup> For the all too compliant accommodation of these gentry in the past we may again recall Wilson, pp. 184-5: 'Where they find the greatest unthrift, that hath lands and other livings left unto him, there they will be most ready to feed him in his riot and unnecessary expenses, making their gain to be his chiefest hurt.' 'This is the occasion of diverse bankrupts, of many decayed gentlemen, that are compelled for little to sell their lands away' (p. 227).

<sup>2</sup> II. ii. 186-9.

<sup>3</sup> v. iv. 83-4.

<sup>4</sup> W. B. Yeats, 'An Acre of Grass'.

himself and his art. However, with due respect for the insight of proverbial comment and for a well-established critical view, we must reject both of these interpretations. As the Timon of the first Act is not an abstract type of the prodigal but an ideal feudal lord, the representative of specific medieval values, a dispenser of feudal bounty, so the Timon of the last two Acts is not a symbol of savage rage and timeless misanthropy or of protest against human ingratitude but a man shattered and disillusioned to the point of madness by his discovery that the traditional beliefs he has lived by are no longer the beliefs of the world around him. Moreover, the fact that the speeches put into the mouth of Timon have a social and economic reference far beyond the situation of the play makes it likely that Shakespeare was using Timon not as a voice for his own obscure 'tragic gloom', but rather as a mouthpiece through which he could occasionally express his own attitude to certain historical developments of his own time.<sup>1</sup>

It is true, of course, that Shakespeare's mood, as we can divine it, is confused and often collapses into anarchic despair. But there is much lucid vision behind it as well. For instance, advancing beyond the misguided optimism of the *Merchant of Venice*, he now appears to realize that the new anti-feudal forces of commercialism, money, and self-interest are in the ascendant. He represents them as defacing chivalry and beating down nobility, not simply as something alien and exterior, but as an insidious, irresistible infection from within. Timon's acquaintances, even Ventidius whom he releases from imprisonment for debt, are the children of a new world, as calculating and profit-seeking as any City lawyer or merchant. A dozen words of Lucullus, when he is applied to for help by Timon's servant,<sup>2</sup> illuminate the change in a vivid lightning flash: 'This is

<sup>1</sup> I find much to agree with in A. S. Collins's acute study of *Timon* (*R.E.S.* xxii, No. 86). Mr. Collins describes the play as 'a satire upon a cold-blooded commercial community'; he sees Timon steadily as 'Ideal Bounty and Friendship' and 'no mere extravagant fool', who is brought into conflict with 'a very clearly seen society, corrupted by wealth and selfishness', 'a world of usury'. His analysis is much less abstract than that of Professor Ellis-Fermor, who defines the central idea of the play as the 'hollowness of society and its relations' and, dissatisfied by the lack of individuality in Timon, asks the question: 'If he is of mature age, why is he such a fool?' (*R.E.S.* xviii, No. 71). I also agree with Mr. Collins's suggestion that the play has some of the qualities of a Morality. Where I depart from him is in my contention that *Timon* is far more concrete and relevant to Shakespeare's own time than he allows. I have tried to show that Timon represents feudal rather than ideal Bounty and Friendship and that he is an ideal placed not merely in an actual society of 'wealth and selfishness' but in the actual society of Shakespeare's own day, where the forces of commercialism and early capitalism were slowly and surely disrupting the values and morality of the feudal order. I find some confirmation of my own view in the fact that Mr. Collins skips all too rapidly over Timon's tirades, particularly over his attitude to 'gold' or a money economy.

<sup>2</sup> Tawney's account (Introduction to Wilson's *Discourse*, p. 33) of the Earl of Lincoln sending his servant out in a hurry to borrow £230 reminds us of Timon dispatching his servants on a similar mission. But Lincoln had sunk lower: he had to apply for help to a tradesman.

no time to lend money, *especially upon friendship, without security*.<sup>1</sup> These words are the direct contradiction of medieval Christian morality, which had taught that money should be lent only as an act of friendship.<sup>2</sup> They are also the direct contradiction of Antonio's medieval creed:

For when did friendship take  
A breed of barren metal of his friend?<sup>3</sup>

Nor is there a single one among all Timon's acquaintances who plays the part of Antonio. All belong unmistakably to the Shylock world of the cash-nexus, and the only unselfish character in Timon's circle is his steward Flavius.<sup>4</sup>

Another advance in Shakespeare's attitude is his clear perception that usury must be related to a much wider context of profit-making and self-interest, and throughout the play there is an all-pervading expansion of the spirit of usury until it becomes the 'world's soul'. Alcibiades is made several times to repeat the charge that the State itself is controlled by usurers and money-makers:

I have kept back their foes,  
While they have told their money, and let out  
Their coin upon large interest.<sup>5</sup>

For Timon all old men are usurers—

Pity not honoured Age for his white beard;  
He is a usurer—<sup>6</sup>

just as all masters, by reason of their commercial practices, are thieves and swindlers:

Bound servants, steal!  
Large-handed robbers your grave masters are,  
And pill by law,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Timon*, III. i. 45-7. It is interesting to compare this with the Duke's remark in *Measure for Measure* III. ii. 240-4: 'There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure, but security enough to make fellowship accursed: much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world.'

<sup>2</sup> The Third Stranger's comment on Lucius' refusal to assist Timon, 'Religion groans at it' (III. ii. 82), is a pointed and forceful remark, not just a conventional one.

<sup>3</sup> *Merchant of Venice*, I. iii. 135. My quotation follows the Folio text—'breed of barren metal'.

<sup>4</sup> We may link Flavius with Adam in *As You Like It*. Adam is another faithful feudal retainer:

O good old man! how well in thee appears  
The constant service of the antique world,  
When service sweat for duty, not for meed. (II. iii. 56-8.)

<sup>5</sup> *Timon*, III. v. 107-9.

<sup>6</sup> IV. iii. 110-11.

<sup>7</sup> IV. i. 10-12.

and (to the thieves):

Yet thanks I must you con  
That you are thieves profess'd, that you work not  
In holier shapes; for there is boundless theft  
In limited professions.<sup>1</sup>

At another time, when he inquires of Flavius:

But tell me true . . .  
Is not thy kindness subtle, covetous,  
A *usuring* kindness?<sup>2</sup>

he twists the word from its economic sense into a forceful term of moral obloquy, a synonym for self-advantage. As he goes on to explain, 'usuring kindness' is the behaviour of rich men who 'deal gifts, Expecting in return twenty for one'. We recall his earlier faith:

There 's none  
Can truly say he gives, if he receives.<sup>3</sup>

But these phrases, though not to be ignored, are small details in the general texture of the play. Much more boldly, not to say violently, indicative of Shakespeare's mood are the curses and longings for the destruction of the human race that he allows Timon to pour forth so abundantly, in outbursts like:

The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction  
Robs the vast sea; the moon's an arrant thief,  
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun;  
The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves  
The moon into salt tears; the earth's a thief,  
That feeds and breeds by a composture stolen  
From general excrement; each thing's a thief;  
The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power  
Have uncheck'd theft. Love not yourselves; away!  
Rob one another. There's more gold. Cut throats;  
All that you meet are thieves: to Athens go,  
Break open shops; nothing can you steal  
But thieves do lose it: steal no less than this  
I give you; and gold confound you howsoever!<sup>4</sup>

The meaning of this speech is clear enough, and essentially it is the meaning of the fragments on usury quoted above. Cut-throat, unrestricted self-seeking, so Timon holds, is indistinguishable from theft. It is a disruptive force, and it has spread until it has become universal. Nor should we be confused or deceived into thinking that because this is all a wish for

<sup>1</sup> IV. iii. 427-30.

<sup>2</sup> I. ii. 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> IV. iii. 510-13.

<sup>4</sup> IV. iii. 438-51.

destruction and not a reflection of existing reality, the vision of Timon (and in all probability that of Shakespeare himself) was distorted. Shakespeare was not writing a sober prose work like Wilson but poetry and drama, both of which thrive on bold, arresting, and exaggerated forms of expression.<sup>1</sup> What Timon's situation gave him a chance of uttering was not so much an hysterical misanthropic wish for the destruction of mankind, though in moments of baffled despair he, like Timon, may have experienced such a wish, as a conviction that human society would destroy itself<sup>2</sup> if commercialism and self-seeking were allowed a rampant unpruned growth. In this belief he was right, and wrong—right because in the following half-century the new economic forces did destroy the old religious, political, and moral order, and wrong because feudal society was replaced by bourgeois society. But at least he had a shrewd notion of what in the medieval and feudal order—its intense religiousness, its local loyalties, its forms of economic organization, its hierarchal principles—were especially vulnerable to the impact of the new forces:

Pity, and fear,  
Religion to the Gods, peace, justice, truth,  
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,  
Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,  
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,  
Decline to your confounding contraries,  
And let confusion live!<sup>3</sup>

Part of Shakespeare's confusion arose from the insoluble problem of 'bounty'. He obviously valued bounty as a virtue and regarded it as a justification for feudal privilege and wealth. But he could see that any attempt to maintain it in its old traditional form was likely, in this new world of self-interest, to spell ruin. Flavius, like Adam in *As You Like It*, a servant and a backward-looking lover of the old order, poses the dilemma in its most explicit form as he ponders sorrowfully over the fate of Timon:

Poor honest lord! brought low by his own heart,  
Undone by goodness. Strange, unusual blood,  
When man's worst sin is he does too much good!  
Who then dares to be half so kind again?

<sup>1</sup> A. S. Collins (loc. cit.) has a shrewd observation that is relevant here: 'Exaggeration is the soul of moral teaching' (p. 101).

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare is by no means alone in the exaggeration of his fears. For instance, in his Preface to the *Discourse upon Usury* Wilson writes (p. 177): 'I do verily believe, the end of this world is nigh at hand', and this pessimism is later echoed by the Preacher: 'It is certain, as I take it, the world is almost at an end' (p. 200).

<sup>3</sup> IV. i. 15-21. These lines and the previous quotation should be read in conjunction with some of the passages in *Lear*—notably with Gloucester's speech 'These late eclipses in the sun' (I. ii. 112 f.) and Lear's 'There thou might'st behold the great image of authority' (IV. vi. 162 f.) where the 'usurer hangs the cozener'.



For bounty, that makes gods, does still mar men.  
 My dearest lord, bless'd, to be most accursed,  
 Rich, only to be wretched, thy great fortunes  
 Are made thy chief afflictions.<sup>1</sup>

But if in this respect Shakespeare's attitude is confused, his perception of the scope and power of money is quite remarkable, indeed almost uncanny if we remember that he lived at a time when money was still only a small and subordinate part of the economic system. Timon's two chief apostrophes to gold must certainly be quoted in full:

1. Gold! yellow, glittering, precious gold! No, gods,  
 I am no idle votarist. Roots, you clear heavens!  
 Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,  
 Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant.  
 Ha! you gods, why this? What this, you gods? Why, this  
 Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,  
 Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:  
 This yellow slave  
 Will knit and break religions; bless the accurs'd;  
 Make the hoar leprosy ador'd; place thieves,  
 And give them title, knee, and approbation  
 With senators on the bench; this is it  
 That makes the wappen'd widow wed again:  
 She, whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores  
 Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices  
 To the April day again. Come, damned earth,  
 Thou common whore of mankind, that putt'st odds  
 Among the rout of nations.<sup>2</sup>

2. O thou sweet king-killer, and clear divorce  
 'Twixt natural son and sire! thou bright defiler  
 Of Hymen's purest bed! thou valiant Mars!  
 Thou ever young, fresh, lov'd, and delicate wooer,  
 Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow  
 That lies on Dian's lap! thou visible god,  
 That solder'st close impossibilities,  
 And mak'st them kiss! that speak'st with every tongue,  
 To every purpose! O thou touch of hearts!  
 Think, thy slave man rebels, and by thy virtue  
 Set them into confounding odds, that beasts  
 May have the world in empire!<sup>3</sup>

Both of these descriptions of the essence of money are magnificent, for with the eloquence and compressed, concrete imagery of Shakespeare's

<sup>1</sup> IV. ii. 37-44.

<sup>2</sup> IV. iii. 26-43.

<sup>3</sup> IV. iii. 383-94.

best poetry they combine a rare penetration of thought. Taken together they define, exactly and fully, the two essential qualities of money. First, there is its omnipotence, for, being able to buy everything, it can mediate all things to itself—not just economic commodities, but love, religion, political and religious power. Secondly, money is 'visible god', having the miraculous power of uniting and changing opposites. As an individual a man may be 'foul', yet money gives him the power to buy in marriage the 'fair', that is to say, the opposite to himself. Or again a man may be old or base or cowardly, but because the human qualities of youth, honour, courage can be purchased by money, the man who buys them becomes himself young, honourable, courageous.<sup>1</sup> It is above all the dissolvent, the dynamic agent of change, and that is why Shakespeare, who had so much sympathy for the traditional but challenged ways of life, instinctively feared it and singled it out for attack. When Timon makes his discovery of gold, he does not use it to win back his position in society; he piles it on to whores, thieves, and rebellious soldiers for what he considers to be its essential purpose of destruction.<sup>2</sup>

It should now be easy to appreciate the full significance of these courtesans Phrynia and Timandra on whom Timon bestows his new-found gold. We have already, through one or two small and subtle strokes, been half prepared for the emergence of these characters. Apemantus, in an early scene, gibes at the usurers' servants as '*bawds* between gold and want', while a few lines later the Fool declares:

I think no usurer but has a fool to his servant: my mistress is one, and I am her fool. When men come to borrow of your masters, they approach sadly, and go away merry; but they enter my mistress' house merrily, and go away sadly.<sup>3</sup>

Timon, too, ends his 'Gold! yellow glittering precious gold' speech with—

Come, damned earth,  
Thou common *whore* of mankind, that putt'st odds  
Among the rout of nations.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is another interesting parallel in Wilson's *Discourse*, p. 189: 'It is money . . . say they, that makes a man to be taken for wise, honest, valiant, mighty, yea, and for a king's fellow too. This opinion have many men, and I fear it to be the creed of the world at this time.'

<sup>2</sup> For a similar expression of Shakespeare's attitude to gold see *Cymbeline*—Cloten's speech 'Tis gold which buys admittance' (II. iii 75 f.), where Cloten is transformed for a moment into Timon, and Arviragus' speech:

All gold and silver rather turn to dirt!  
As 'tis no better reckoned but of those  
Who worship dirty gods. (III. vi. 54-6.)

*Cymbeline* contains many images drawn from commercial practice—many of them so awkward that they seem almost to have been dragged in.

<sup>3</sup> II. ii. 102-7.

<sup>4</sup> IV. iii. 41-3.

If these images have made any impression on our minds we are ready for the appearance of a whore as a character amid Timon's denunciations of the new world of the cash-nexus, for plainly there exists in Shakespeare's mind a close parallel, even a connexion,<sup>1</sup> between usury and prostitution. Both practices, from Shakespeare's medieval viewpoint, are morally reprehensible because they are the degeneration of a human relationship into a purely mercenary one. According to medieval teaching, a man should lend his goods and money out of friendship and Christian charity, taking nothing in return; the usurer lends his money only for financial gain. Where there is genuine affection between a man and a woman, the woman should give herself as part of that love; the whore gives herself only for a money payment. Both the whore and the usurer sacrifice all moral scruples in the single pursuit of money, and just as usury corrupts and destroys the healthy body of society, so prostitution spreads disease<sup>2</sup> through the bodies of men. In other words, prostitution is but one more relationship through which gold, the 'bright defiler Of Hymen's purest bed', 'sets [men] into confounding odds, that beasts May have the world in empire'; and that is why Timon when he is calling for the destruction of society bribes and urges Phrynia and Timandra to ply their trade with the utmost vigour;

Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust.  
 Make use of thy salt hours; season the slaves  
 For tubs and baths; bring down rose-cheeked youth  
 To the tub-fast and the diet.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are some lines (132-3) in iv. iii that suggest that, for the time being at least, prostitution and usury had completely fused as concepts in Shakespeare's mind. When Phrynia and Timandra inquire whether Timon has more gold to give, he replies, 'Enough to make a whore forswear her trade, and to make whores a bawd.' This may mean simply that, with gold in her possession, a whore may set up as a bawd. But a whore setting up as a bawd is hardly forswearing her trade. Possibly Shakespeare is punning on the word 'bawd', and his meaning is that with gold a whore can give up her trade and become a usurer, that is to say, a kind of bawd. This interpretation is strengthened by Apemantus' description of the usurer's servants as 'bawds between gold and want'. It is worth noting that Wilson, too, draws a parallel between usury and prostitution in his *Discourse*, p. 268: 'Neither ought men to make the most of their own, as you say, otherwise than by law they may: for so the evil woman may say that because her body is her own, she may do with it what she list, and company with whom she pleaseth for her best profit and avail; whereas God hath commanded that everybody should keep his own vessel pure unto holiness, because we are all images of God, created to His likeness.'

<sup>2</sup> We cannot restrict the significance of prostitution in this play to the parallel that Shakespeare draws between the whore and the usurer. There is a preoccupation with sexual disease (no longer confined to light-hearted jests about 'French crowns') and even a repugnance from the sexual act in many of Shakespeare's plays at this period, and Middleton Murry (*Shakespeare*, p. 339) is probably on the right lines when he ascribes this feature of his work to the spread of venereal disease. Yet there is a connexion still to be drawn. Confusing the accidental with the essential, Shakespeare may well have regarded usury and venereal disease as common symptoms of a world in decay.

<sup>3</sup> iv. iii. 83-6.

There is one further point of interest to be noted in this acute and many-sided commentary on the break-up of feudal institutions and ideas. It may be sound criticism to object that the Alcibiades under-plot 'is not closely enough interwoven with the texture of the piece'.<sup>1</sup> But there is at least one visible thread that links it to the main fabric. Fundamentally, Alcibiades' quarrel with the Athenian Senate of business men is not that it refuses to show mercy to his friend, not that it is ungrateful for that friend's past services to the State, but that it is punishing him for an act that is not really criminal at all: his friend has done nothing more than draw his sword on a point of honour 'seeing his reputation touch'd to death', and in Alcibiades' eyes there is no essential difference between a private act of this kind and the act of a State in going to war. Likewise, from the feudal standpoint Alcibiades' friend has done no wrong: he is, as F. S. Boas aptly describes him, 'the victim of the chivalrous principle of honour'.<sup>2</sup>

Whether the scene that presents this dispute is Shakespeare's work or not,<sup>3</sup> the clash itself has a thoroughly convincing air of reality, for the class of men most likely to reject duelling and the principle of 'honour' that was used to justify it would be precisely the class that the dramatist puts into his Athenian Senate—usurers and men of business who 'love security'.<sup>4</sup> And as with his attitude to gold, Shakespeare's presentation of the conflict in these terms is visionary, since the English *bourgeoisie* did in the end, slowly, by law and moral precept, abolish the feudal and aristocratic 'code of honour'.<sup>5</sup> History was on the side of the Senate, not of the feudal Alcibiades.

<sup>1</sup> F. S. Boas, *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*, p. 495. However, it is to be observed that both Professor Ellis-Fermor and A. S. Collins in their studies of *Timon* (loc. cit.) regard Alcibiades' interview with the Senate as the climax in the design of the play.

<sup>2</sup> F. S. Boas, op. cit., p. 502.

<sup>3</sup> I am entirely with Boas in giving this scene (II. v.) to Shakespeare.

<sup>4</sup> The full quotation (III. v. 81-3) runs:

And, for I know your reverend ages love  
Security, I'll pawn my victories, all  
My honour to you, upon his good returns.

The primary meaning of 'security' here is obviously the economic one. But since Alcibiades is replying to the Second Senator's charge that his friend is a 'sworn rioter', it is likely that he also intended the word to imply 'law and order'.

<sup>5</sup> Actually, there seems to have been an increase of duelling in Shakespeare's own time, when, largely through the spread of foreign customs and fashions, an elaborate code of quarrelling 'by the book' was evolved (see Touchstone's account of a quarrel 'upon the seventh Cause'—*As You Like It*, v. iv. 71 f.). It was not until Victorian times that the duel of honour disappeared [G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (London, 1944), pp. 159 and 505].

## THOMAS MOORE AS THE AUTHOR OF *SPIRIT OF BOCCACCIO'S DECAMERON*

By HERBERT G. WRIGHT

ON 24 June 1812 Cadell and Davies published *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron; comprising Three Days Entertainment; translated, selected, connected, and versified, from the Italian*. The identity of the translator was not disclosed. This article seeks to prove that he was Thomas Moore.

The Irish poet was fully conversant with Italian, as may be seen from numerous passages in his memoirs, journal, and correspondence, and on his visit to Florence in 1819 we observe that he bought a copy of Boccaccio.<sup>1</sup> But much earlier he had read Boccaccio's commentary on Dante.<sup>2</sup> In all likelihood he had come across this in Lord Moira's house at Donington, where he had access to an excellent library. It was with the express intention of making full use of this collection that he settled at Kegworth in the spring of 1812.<sup>3</sup> There were urgent reasons for this decision. He had married in 1811, his daughter Barbara had been born in February 1812, and by 6 March it had become clear to Moore that he must renounce his former expectations of patronage and rely on his writing to support himself, his young wife, and his child.<sup>4</sup> At the time he had in hand the continuation of *Irish Melodies* which had begun to appear in 1808, and *Sacred Melodies*, the first part of which, however, was not published till 1816. *Lalla Rookh* had also begun to germinate but five years were to pass before it was given to an eager public.

It would, therefore, not be surprising if Moore turned to some other scheme to meet his pressing financial needs. In his correspondence there is a letter dated 19 September 1812 which evidently refers to work on which he has been engaged. Having spoken of various preoccupations, he tells how he has also been harassed by his publisher Power, 'full of fuss and fury, about Cymon, Sacred Melodies, his brother, &c. &c.'<sup>5</sup> Cymon is, of course, the hero of the first tale in the fifth day of the *Decameron* and had become universally known through Dryden's *Fables*. There seems to be nothing in the canon of Moore's writings to which this would apply, but it might be used as a sort of code-name for *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron*. And despite the anonymity of this book, the identity of the author was

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence* (London, 1853-4), iii. 78.

<sup>2</sup> See among the juvenile poems 'A Vision of Philosophy' [*Poetical Works* (London, 1853), ii. 177 n.] and *Il Comento di Giovanni Boccacci sopra la Commedia*, ed. G. Milanesi (Florence, 1895), i. 402-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence*, i. 273-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 271.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 303.

perhaps suspected by the discerning Jeffrey, as may be hinted in a letter that he wrote to Moore on 18 September 1814, asking him to review Sismondi's *Literature of the South*. He was to take it, Jeffrey suggested, as a starting-point for a characterization of the great poets of Italy, Spain, and Portugal, 'perhaps giving us *the spirit* of some of them in a free version' of their most typical passages.<sup>1</sup> One would normally be inclined to regard the words in italics merely as conveying a strong emphasis, but on this occasion it is not unreasonable to surmise that in these lines Jeffrey was alluding to the work under discussion, for 'giving us the spirit . . . in a free version' describes precisely what had been done with the *Decameron*.

Internal evidence strengthens the assumption of Moore's authorship, and signs are not lacking of a connexion between *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron* and Moore's early poems. In particular, there is a close relationship with *Lalla Rookh*. When planning this romance, Moore read many accounts of travel, among them being Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*. The mention of 'Afric's lunar Mountains' in *Lalla Rookh* is accompanied by a note derived from Bruce: 'The Mountains of the Moon, or the Montes Lunæ of antiquity, at the foot of which the Nile is supposed to arise.'<sup>2</sup> Answering to this in the description of the hideous Ciutazza<sup>3</sup> we find:

Her skin was yellow, blue, and green,  
As if she was a cross between  
An Ethiopian male Baboon,  
And Nymph, from mountains of the Moon.<sup>4</sup>

Still more remarkable, however, is the oriental element which may readily be explained by the absorption of Moore in his preparations for *Lalla Rookh*. Here we may note the Mohammedan religion, a bond between Africa and Asia. A striking feature of *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron* is the introduction of Mohammedans into the tales. Thus Paganino<sup>5</sup> figures as a Moorish corsair, and when Chinzico tries to recover his wife whom Paganino has abducted, she cites the prophet:

Mahomed says, 'cursed are those,  
Who unto Christians eyes expose'.<sup>6</sup>

Again, in the adaptation of the ninth tale of the ninth day in the *Decameron* the traveller encountered by Melisso on his journey to see King Solomon becomes 'a mounted Mussulman'. His name is not 'Gioseffo' but 'Osbeck Goseffo',<sup>7</sup> the addition being perhaps suggested by the name of Osbeck,

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence*, ii. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Poetical Works*, vi. 165 (text and note).

<sup>3</sup> *Dec.* viii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron*, i. 161.

<sup>5</sup> *Dec.* ii. 10.

<sup>6</sup> *S.O.B.D.* ii. 181.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 192.



King of the Turks.<sup>1</sup> In the form Osebeck the name recurs when Ambrose, seeking to win his wager with Bernard,<sup>2</sup> has himself conveyed into the house of the latter in a chest wrought with Chinese figures. This is ostensibly consigned to the merchant, and with it he sends a note that ends thus:

Allah preserve thee, and thy race.  
May'st thou the prophet's first heav'n deck,  
Prays at Macao Osebeck.<sup>3</sup>

The connexion of a Chinese chest with a Mohammedan called Osebeck is curious. It may have arisen through the association of the Turkish name Osbeck with that of the Swedish scholar Peter Osbeck whose *Voyage to China and the East Indies* had appeared in English in 1771. Moore may have come across a reference to this book in Pinkerton's *Voyages*,<sup>4</sup> a work which he quotes more than once in the notes to *Lalla Rookh*, and going on to read it, found an allusion to Macao.<sup>5</sup> Another oriental name that has penetrated into the story of Ambrose and Bernard is that of the sultan whose favour is won by the disguised heroine, Zineura. He is Selim, 'his prophet's pride, his people's helm'. When seeking for an explanation of this name, one recalls that in 1807 the Turkish Sultan Selim III had been strangled by order of his successor Mustapha IV. It would only be natural that so spectacular an incident should be fresh in the memory of a writer in 1812. But another explanation, which is even more likely, should not be overlooked. In the last part of *Lalla Rookh* the hero is the son of the great Acbar, Emperor of India, and till he succeeded to the throne was known as Selim. Under this name he figures in the poem which ends with the union of Selim and Nourmahal.<sup>6</sup> It is characteristic of the oriental bias of the story of Zineura that it culminates in her marriage to the Sultan, a development entirely alien to Boccaccio. On the other hand, the remark that in doing so he spurned 'sect's intolerance' is typical of Moore who deplored religious bigotry and fanaticism.

An attempt is made in *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron* to depict the Sultan's court:

Rich sherbet golden goblets crown'd;  
On Turkey cushions Selim sate,  
Surrounded by his lords of state,  
Who, while they hear the jester joke,  
Chew opium, and through rose-pipes smoke.<sup>7</sup>

Some features of this mode of life could, of course, be gleaned from many sources, but a number of details are certainly drawn from P. Russell's

<sup>1</sup> Dec. ii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Dec. ii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> S.O.B.D. iii. 213.

<sup>4</sup> xiii. 375.

<sup>5</sup> P. Osbeck, *Voyage to China*, i. 178.

<sup>6</sup> *Poetical Works*, vii. 19-55.

<sup>7</sup> S.O.B.D. iii. 232.

*Natural History of Aleppo*, though Russell expressly maintains that the Turks do not chew opium but swallow it at once.<sup>1</sup> This book was familiar to Moore who mentions it again and again in the notes to *Lalla Rookh*.<sup>2</sup>

The oriental background is once more conjured up, this time more vaguely, by a simile in the tale of Rinaldo,<sup>3</sup> when a bath and supper are prepared for him

With so much elegance of taste,  
A Queen might lave, and Sultan feast.<sup>4</sup>

The oriental use of cosmetics is glanced at in the story of Constantia and Martuccio.<sup>5</sup> The old Saracen woman at Susa to whom the heroine is taken, is portrayed as having 'eyelids limn'd with blackest lead', and her attendants also have 'blacken'd eyes'.<sup>6</sup> The practice is described in detail by Russell. He says that a probe of ivory, wood, or silver is 'charged with a powder named the black Kohol. The probe being dipt in water, a little of the powder is sprinkled on it; the middle part is then applied horizontally to the eye, and the eyelids being shut upon it, the probe is drawn through between them, leaving the inside tinged, and a black rim all round the eye.'<sup>7</sup> Thomas Shaw, who had travelled in Barbary, also gives an account of this habit, adding that the powder is lead ore.<sup>8</sup> Moore quotes both these writers in *Lalla Rookh* and introduces the following lines into the poem:

And others mix the Kohol's jetty dye,  
To give that long, dark languish to the eye.<sup>9</sup>

Elsewhere there are allusions to Houris;<sup>10</sup> the magician consulted by Ansaldo in order to obtain a garden full of flowers in the depth of winter<sup>11</sup> is an Armenian necromancer who finally proves to be a genie.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Pietro Canigiano, who helps Salabaetto to outwit Madonna Lanciofiore,<sup>13</sup> is connected with the Orient when he is presented as the man 'Who humbled so Tartaria's Khan'.<sup>14</sup> The Tartars are again mentioned in the tale<sup>15</sup> where Neri degli Uberti buys an estate near Castello da Mare. It is situated

from that town so far,  
As could a Tartar's gut-strung bow,  
A well-tipp'd feather'd arrow throw.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edition of 1794, ch. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Poetical Works*, vi. 65, 113, 177, 205, 231, 245, 247; vii. 16, 45.

<sup>3</sup> Dec. ii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *S.O.B.D.* ii. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Dec. v. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *S.O.B.D.* i. 146.

<sup>7</sup> *The Natural History of Aleppo* (1794), i. 111.

<sup>8</sup> *Travels or Observations, relating to Barbary*. Cf. Pinkerton's *Voyages*, xv. 660-1.

<sup>9</sup> *Poetical Works*, vi. 65 and n.

<sup>10</sup> *S.O.B.D.* ii. 37 and 96; iii. 232.

<sup>11</sup> Dec. x. 5.

<sup>12</sup> *S.O.B.D.* ii. 36-40.

<sup>13</sup> Dec. viii. 10.

<sup>14</sup> *S.O.B.D.* ii. 106.

<sup>15</sup> Dec. ix. 6.

<sup>16</sup> *S.O.B.D.* i. 180.

This intrusion of the Tartars reflects an interest which is also revealed in the notes to *Lalla Rookh*. They make it plain that Moore had read *Accounts of Independent Tatar* in Pinkerton's *Travels*.<sup>1</sup>

The homeward journey of Melisso and Goseffo after their visit to King Solomon<sup>2</sup> provides an opportunity for the insertion of a certain amount of local colour. Leaving Jerusalem,

For fifteen days they journey'd on,  
Through Balbeck to mount Lebanon:  
Sometime for rest they there delay'd,  
Amid stupendous cedars' shade,  
From thence through olive mounts they roam,  
Wash'd by the fierce Orontes foam;

They wind along its mazy course  
Through meadows sweet, and caverns hoarse,<sup>3</sup>

amid slopes covered with myrtles and oleanders. This is a generalized picture which owes something to Henry Maundrell's *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, a work quoted by Moore in a footnote to *Lalla Rookh*.<sup>4</sup> The impression of the fierce Orontes was possibly derived from Bruce's account of how, in trying to ford the river, swollen with rain, he and his horse were swept away by the violent current.<sup>5</sup> It was undoubtedly another book on travel, Russell's *Natural History of Aleppo*, that inspired the lines:

Along this river's bank they view  
The Ornithoga lily blue,  
With azure petals spreading far,  
And there entitled Bethlem's star.<sup>6</sup>

The sensitiveness to the beauty of wild flowers which underlies this passage can also be traced in a quotation from the same work by Moore in a footnote to *Lalla Rookh*, where he observes the resplendent yellow of the Persian lily and the vivid verdure after the autumnal rains.<sup>7</sup> The description of the ornithogalum, however, takes a certain liberty, for Russell records only white, green, and yellow varieties. So either the colour was changed for the sake of the rhyme or the alteration was due to a recollection of the blue lotos, 'blue water-lilies', as they are termed in *Lalla Rookh*, which, as Moore knew, were to be found not far away in Persia.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Poetical Works*, vi. 23 and 107.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 338 above.

<sup>3</sup> *S.O.B.D.* ii. 200-1.

<sup>4</sup> *Poetical Works*, vi. 310. Moore probably read Maundrell in Pinkerton's *Voyages*, x.

<sup>5</sup> *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (Dublin, 1790), i. lix. Bruce's work was known to Moore, who, for example, quotes him on the subject of Balbec (*Poetical Works*, vi. 176n).

<sup>6</sup> *S.O.B.D.* ii. 200-1.

<sup>7</sup> *Poetical Works*, vi. 247.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 81 and n.

Another account of a journey, contained in Pinkerton's collection,<sup>1</sup> which, as we have seen, Moore so often perused, seems to have contributed its share to the narrative of the adventures of Melisso and Goseffo. It is Richard Pococke's *Description of the East* which follows shortly after Maundrell's *Journey*. Pococke tells how he travelled in a caravan through the desert and how glad he was on occasion to take shelter from the intense heat under shady trees by a rivulet. He and his companions stood in fear of the marauding Arabs who roved along their route. The sight of four horsemen riding some distance ahead brought the caravan to a halt so that they might proceed in close formation, and later, on the sudden appearance of fifty mounted Arabs, the alert was given, fire-arms were held ready, and the footmen picked up stones for their slings. On coming to Aleppo, Pococke noted 'a convent of Dervises' and also observed that the city was a trading-centre visited by a caravan from 'Balsora or Bosra, on the Euphrates'. It was evidently these details which, imaginatively treated, helped to build up the following passage:

They travel unfrequented roads,  
Tow'rds Bofra's<sup>2</sup> mountainous abodes;  
A desert to the eastward stretch'd,  
By which these mountains must be reach'd.  
The second day its verge they gain,  
And as they cross the parching plain;  
Perceiving some wild Arab bands,  
They swiftly race o'er arid sands,  
Their sobbing horses forward press;  
And gain a shrubby wilderness.  
From whence through thirst each panting steed  
Is hardly able to proceed.  
They mounted a steep rugged ridge,  
And saw with joy below a bridge,  
Through which a rapid river ran,  
And by its side a caravan.  
Hence anxiously our trav'lers speed,  
Here mules and camels drink and feed;  
And drivers their Borroccias fill,  
Afresh with water from this rill;  
And here the friends in palm-tree shade,  
Their own and horses thirst allay'd.<sup>3</sup>

This bridge is the Ponte all'Oca of Boccaccio. But he knows nothing of all

<sup>1</sup> Vol. x.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot trace a mountain or other place called Bofra. It seems likely that a misreading of 'Bofra' in Pinkerton's text gave the name Bofra, which was associated in the poem, not with the Euphrates, but with 'mountainous abodes'.

<sup>3</sup> S.O.B.D. ii. 196-7.

this description of the journey through the desert, and the *buono uomo* of his tale becomes a 'dervise' who, it may be surmised, had his headquarters in the convent seen by Pococke near Aleppo. In the same way, if Melisso and Goseffo, before turning their horses towards Antioch, ride to the mountain of Pieria, this episode has its origin in Pococke's narrative, where the situation of Pieria is discussed at length.<sup>1</sup>

Quite apart from the interest that it displays in the Orient, *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron* throws light on the author. There are some indications that he was a Catholic. Thus he makes the characters invoke the Blessed Virgin and the Saints repeatedly. Again in the tale where Ferondo is supposed to have passed away,<sup>2</sup>

The Abbot, whose regret seem'd great,  
Significantly shook his head,  
And pour'd out unction on the dead,<sup>3</sup>

a rite about which Boccaccio is silent. Similarly, when Ferondo has unexpectedly revived, to the dismay of the monks, the abbot bids them not only carry with them the crucifix and sprinkle holy water as they go towards Ferondo, but also count their beads carefully, the last of these directions being another addition.<sup>4</sup> Though any Protestant would, of course, be familiar with all these traits, they appear to come unsought as if to one brought up in the Catholic faith.

At the same time the poet shows no great zeal or devoutness. If he condemns the wanton abbesses who not only err themselves but also encourage their nuns in wrongdoing,<sup>5</sup> he does nothing to temper Boccaccio's castigation of monks and friars. On the contrary, he takes a genial delight in seeing their frailties exposed and their corruption denounced. This spirit may be compared with that revealed in the mocking lines of Moore's epistle 'To the Honourable W. R. Spencer':

Thou oft hast told me of the happy hours  
Enjoy'd by thee in fair Italia's bowers,  
Where, lingering yet, the ghost of ancient wit  
Midst modern monks profanely dares to flit,  
And pagan spirits, by the Pope unlaid,  
Haunt every stream and sing through every shade. . . .

In this world, though far removed from his in time, Ovid is entirely at home:

There still he roves, and laughing loves to see  
How modern priests with ancient rakes agree;

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, *Voyages*, x, notes on pp. 547 and 551.

<sup>2</sup> *Dec.* iii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 90.

<sup>3</sup> *S.O.B.D.* ii. 79.

<sup>5</sup> *Dec.* iii. 1 and iv. 5.

How, 'neath the cowl, the festal garland shines,  
And Love still finds a niche in Christian shrines.<sup>1</sup>

In his own youthful poetry Moore had toyed with the idea of freedom in love, and in fact it was on this ground that he had been so severely mauled by Jeffrey. Such lines as the following could hardly be condoned by any strict *censor morum*:

Where I love, I must not marry;  
Where I marry, cannot love.

Love will never bear enslaving;  
Summer garments suit him best;  
Bliss itself is not worth having,  
If we're by compulsion blest.<sup>2</sup>

This attitude has a close affinity with that of Dioneus who, after Philomena has related her tale,<sup>3</sup> observes:

But still I am rejoic'd to find,  
On one grand point we all agree,  
That Hymen can't so strongly bind,  
But Cupid may set beauty free.<sup>4</sup>

And the same outlook on life is discernible in the remark of Flammetta about Catella,<sup>5</sup>

Who, although stamp'd divinely fair,  
Lov'd *but* her husband, which is rare.<sup>6</sup>

Like 'Mr. Thomas Little', the author of *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron* evidently took pleasure in the amatory writers. Indeed, the book contains passages which in their voluptuousness far outdo anything in Boccaccio's hundred tales. Such passages are the descriptions of the charms of the heroines Belcolore and Niccolosa.<sup>7</sup> One may say of them what Moore pleaded in extenuation of 'Mr. Little's' early poems 'that they were . . . the productions of an age when the passions very often give a colouring too warm to the imagination'.<sup>8</sup>

Outside the text of *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron* other clues to the author may be found. The book is dedicated to Francis James, Earl of Llandaff, an Irish nobleman to whom Moore alludes in his correspondence

<sup>1</sup> *Poetical Works*, ii. 313-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 343-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Dec.* vii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *S.O.B.D.* iii. 146.

<sup>5</sup> *Cf. Dec.* iii. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *S.O.B.D.* ii. 52.

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from *Dec.* viii. 10 and ix. 6. *Cf. S.O.B.D.* ii. 97 and iii. 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Poetical Works*, i. 254.



three years after the publication of these translations from Boccaccio.<sup>1</sup> The author's association with Ireland is established beyond all question in the dialogue between *Book and Reviewers* which precedes the tales. Addressing him, the reviewers declare:

Strong evidence attends thy blundering tongue,  
That thou to rude Hibernia dost belong;  
From whence we scarce can entertain a hope,  
A thing can spring that don't deserve the rope.  
The Scotch at present are, beyond all doubt,  
A nation moral, orderly, and stout.  
To prove what nature civiliz'd may do,  
Now Caledonia ventures to review;  
And Scotland's Poets, when matur'd in age,  
May by their works enrich Apollo's page;  
'Tho' they were but two centuries ago,  
A turbulent ferocious brutal foe—  
Blood-thirsty, fierce, inflexible to bow,  
As the wild Irish savages are now.<sup>2</sup>

A footnote makes it clear that the satirical tone of these lines was inspired by a remark at the end of a review of Landt's *Description of the Feroe Islands* in the *Quarterly*.<sup>3</sup> The note quotes a tribute paid by Sir John Davis in 1600 to the law-abiding character of the Irish and adds this comment: 'Thus we find in 1600, *the Irish* more fearful to offend the laws than the English, or any other nation whatsoever, and in 1810, we behold the *wild Irish* displayed as a standard of *turbulence, ferocity, and brutality*. Mirabile Dictu. What gigantic strides to civilized perfection.'<sup>4</sup> These are obviously the words of one who is quick to resent any aspersion on Ireland and who fearlessly takes up the cudgels against the redoubtable *Quarterly*. He is animated by the same feelings as in later years prompted Moore to challenge critics of Ireland in the *Quarterly* when he wrote his *Satirical and Humorous Poems*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On 22 Aug. 1815, writing from Athassel Abbey, Cashel, he speaks of Lord Llandaff's residence as 'the only fine house in this neighbourhood'. (Cf. *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence*, ii. 80.)

About the Llandaff family I have been provided with the following information by Dr. K. Cunningham. Of Welsh descent, they had married into the Ormonde family. Thomas Mathew, the friend of Swift, was famed for his lavish hospitality. The peerage was bestowed on Francis Mathew, for many years M.P. for Tipperary, and he was chosen as one of the first twenty-eight Irish representative peers at the Union. The title became extinct with the death of Francis James, the second earl, in 1833. Father Mathew, the famous Irish social reformer, and Archbishop David Mathew are connexions of this family, which always spelt its title 'Landaff', the form used in the dedication of *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron*.

<sup>2</sup> *S.O.B.D.* i. 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> *S.O.B.D.* i. 13.

<sup>3</sup> November 1810, p. 342.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Poetical Works*, ix. 232-5 and 257-60.

The patriotic theme is again heard in the 'Conclusion' to *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron*, though here the note has the eloquence of sentiment rather than the laughter of satire, and one cannot help recalling the passion of the *Irish Melodies* which Moore was still composing in 1812. At the close of the third day, the story-tellers having retired to rest, the author greets his readers and bids them slumber calmly. This leads him by contrast to dwell on the unhappy state of Ireland:

When shall poor Erin so repose in peace,  
 When from her couch may be expell'd the thorn,  
 When shall blood-reeking ghastly visions cease,  
 To let her rise refresh'd on breezy morn?  
 When persecution, ignorance, and pride,  
 From ruling councils banish'd shall go forth,  
 She then may be by her own merits try'd,  
 And valued in proportion to her worth.  
 When matricides corruption's bribes shall spurn,  
 And patriotic principles assume,  
 Again Ierne to those sons will turn,  
 Tho' Nero-like they've rip'd her teeming womb.  
 When proud Britannia may in wisdom deign,  
 Her goading rods for silken reins to change,  
 Then Erin's genius and her rosy train,  
 O'er her green bosom joyfully shall range.

So intense is his fervour that his heart warms at the thought of the sympathy shown to his country by Scottish critics, and he is willing to forgive them if they should reject his book:

Hail! Caledonia—learn'd Edina hail!  
 Hail! Scotch reviewers, tho' you damn these sheets,  
 Hibernia stands not lightly in your scale,  
 For which my heart your minds enlighten'd greets.

He ends with an expression of his conviction that one day reason and enlightenment will gain the victory:

The time will come when prejudice's clouds,  
 Dispell'd shall be by reason's cheering ray,  
 And the dark mist which confidence enshrouds,  
 Will fly before her as night flies from day.<sup>1</sup>

Without difficulty one can perceive in these lines an affinity with Moore's *Intolerance*, published in 1808, which denounces bigotry and pleads for toleration. It culminates in a eulogy of Fox as the embodiment of his ideals and, while lamenting his death, finds hope in Grattan. The imagery, that of light struggling with darkness, is akin to that of the 'Conclusion':

<sup>1</sup> *S.O.B.D.* iii. 247-8.

Last of the great, farewell!—yet *not* the last—  
 Though Britain's sunshine hour with thee be past,  
 Ierne still one ray of glory gives,  
 And feels but half thy loss while Grattan lives.<sup>1</sup>

The style of *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron* is smooth and fluent. It has conversational ease, and the author frequently turns Boccaccio's narrative into direct speech, because he is at home with this medium. Indeed, the style possesses the qualities which Jeffrey singled out as characteristic of Moore's poems—'smooth, copious, and familiar diction'.<sup>2</sup> The diction contains some words that catch the eye. Among these is the word 'lunar' in the phrase 'a silver lunar ray'<sup>3</sup> which recalls 'the lunar beam',<sup>4</sup> 'Afric's lunar Mountains',<sup>5</sup> and the parallel 'solar beams'<sup>6</sup> and 'solar fires'<sup>7</sup> in Moore's verse. More important is the mention of the 'nyctanthes' on the evening of the third day of the tales.<sup>8</sup> This word, so rare in literature that it is not recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is the name of a shrub, also known as *Arbor tristis*, of an Indo-Malayan genus akin to the jasmines. The scented white flowers open at dusk and fall at dawn. The nyctanthes appears to have been discovered or introduced into England in 1781 and cannot have been widely known in 1812. The fact that Moore speaks of it twice in the text or the notes to *Lalla Rookh* is therefore very significant. He tells of

the sweet night-flower,  
 When darkness brings the weeping glories out,  
 And spreads its sighs like frankincense about,

and in his note adds: 'The sorrowful nyctanthes, which begins to spread its rich odour after sunset.'<sup>9</sup> In one of the tales<sup>10</sup> there is another word that provides a valuable clue. It occurs in the account of the entertainment given to King Charles by the daughters of Neri degli Uberti. Before they offer him fish caught and prepared in his presence by the side of a stream,<sup>11</sup> one of their attendants brings 'rich noyau'.<sup>12</sup> This liqueur seems not to have reached England until the very end of the eighteenth century and was obviously a fashionable novelty in 1812. Consequently, our attention is attracted when we come across 'noyau' in a poem by Moore, written apparently about 1812. It occurs in an adaptation for satirical purposes of an ode by Horace. The lines

quis devium scortum eliciet domo  
 Lyden?<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Poetical Works*, iii. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *S.O.B.D.* iii. 138.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vi. 165.

<sup>4</sup> *S.O.B.D.* iii. 243.

<sup>5</sup> *Cf. Dec.* x. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *S.O.B.D.* i. 185.

<sup>7</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, July 1806, p. 456.

<sup>8</sup> *Poetical Works*, ii. 123.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* i. 201.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 312.

<sup>11</sup> *Poetical Works*, vi. 88. See also vi. 281n.

<sup>12</sup> Not a pool as in the original.

<sup>13</sup> *Odes*, Bk. II. xi, ll. 21-2.

suggested to Moore, who ascribed the translation to the Prince Regent,

What youth of the Household will cool our Noyau  
In that streamlet delicious,  
That down 'midst the dishes,  
All full of gold fishes,  
Romantic doth flow?<sup>1</sup>

The use of the word 'noyau' in such a context is closely parallel to its employment by the translator of the tales from the *Decameron*.

To sum up, then, the evidence presented indicates that the man who wrote *Spirit of Boccaccio's Decameron* was Thomas Moore. The amatory, patriotic, and religious outlook, the familiarity with books of oriental travel which served as a basis for *Lalla Rookh*, the style and diction, as well as the circumstances of his life and literary career, leave no doubt that he was the author. And if it be asked why he should hide under a cloak of anonymity, the explanation is not far to seek. It was but six years since Jeffrey had attacked him as 'the most licentious of modern versifiers', 'insidious and malignant', guilty of 'insinuating pollution', 'the propagation of immorality', and 'a cold-blooded attempt to corrupt the purity of an innocent heart'.<sup>2</sup> If such exaggerated accusations were levelled at his early poems, what castigation might he not expect for his tales from Boccaccio? Moore, now dependent on his writing for a livelihood, might well be excused if he preferred to veil his identity in discreet silence.

<sup>1</sup> *Poetical Works*, iii. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, July 1806, pp. 456-7.

## 'THE NEW FACES': A NEW EXPLANATION

By A. NORMAN JEFFARES

*If you, that have grown old, were the first dead,  
Neither catalpa tree nor scented lime  
Should hear my living feet, nor would I tread  
Where we wrought that shall break the teeth of Time.  
Let the new faces play what tricks they will  
In the old rooms; night can outbalance day,  
Our shadows rove the garden gravel still,  
The living seem more shadowy than they.*

A NEW explanation of Yeats's poem 'The New Faces'<sup>1</sup> is necessary, for it has been described<sup>2</sup> as 'a declaration of abiding love' written to Maud Gonne. The poem is written to Lady Gregory. The references to the catalpa tree, the limes, and the garden gravel show that the house described is Coole. Yeats chose the catalpa tree because of Lady Gregory's affection for it, and because it was so striking a feature of Coole, as Lady Gregory has herself recorded:

We are looking from the bench that is under the shadow of the catalpa tree—'A Weeping Ash', George Moore has called it<sup>3</sup> telling of his quarrels as he sat there with Yeats 'in the warmth and fragrance of the garden' over that play *Diarmuid and Grania* they were writing, not without differences of opinion. But my own quarrel with him must be for the libel of calling this catalpa by the name of among all trees the one for which I have the least affection, even a slight feeling of distaste. I did not ever find, or ever plant one here at Coole. . . . But the catalpa, coming as I believe from the gentle Pacific zone has no fault to keep it outside the garden walls. The clean limbs spreading over garden bench and wall give no noxious shade, for the leaves larger than the palm of a man's hand . . . are but few beside those of our native trees. The trusses of white blossom add beauty to their pale green. They cast a pleasant shadow on the long bench and a part of the flower border, yet not such darkness as to check the blossoming of tulip or larkspur, or anemone, or the growth of that delicately leaved laurel painters lay on a poet's brow; or of rosemary and the sweet tufted herbs.<sup>4</sup>

The lime-trees are also mentioned in *Coole*,<sup>5</sup> and the particular symbolism which the garden gravel bore for Yeats is explained by Lady Gregory's account of how he used to compose poems and plays while walking there:

The long grey wall that encloses the garden protects a flower border from the

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Yeats, *Collected Poems* (London, 1933), p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> C. M. Bowra, *The Heritage of Symbolism* (London, 1943), p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> George Moore, *Ave*, xv. 349.

<sup>4</sup> Lady Gregory, *Coole*, p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

ocean salt, for all the miles between flung in great storms on the very windows of the house, and is itself protected by an outer line of great beeches. The seeds of these, flung on to the border, often take root and appear, two or three inches of forest trees, among the hyacinth and phlox. The ground dips eastward to the orchard. . . . Yeats planned many a play or poem pacing up and down this gravelled walk before facing the blank paper on the writing table in his room; I stealing a pleasant half hour with him between the ordering of the day's meals and the endless answering of letters that falls to a woman's share; turning just once more again towards the great ilex, its silver grey calling to mind that of the olive against the Italian blue.<sup>1</sup>

The style of the poem, and the fact that it was not generally<sup>2</sup> known until its publication in *The Tower* (1928), may mislead critics into thinking that Yeats wrote it in old age. It should therefore be pointed out that the manuscript of the poem is dated December 1912.<sup>3</sup> At that time Yeats was writing poetry which was disillusioned in outlook. 'The Coming of Wisdom with Time'<sup>4</sup> illustrates this mood:

Though leaves are many, the root is one;  
Through all the lying days of my youth  
I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;  
Now I may wither into the truth.

This disillusioned weariness was of the poetic spirit, a period when the inspiration of his art seemed dead, when he could write:

All things can tempt me from this craft of verse:  
One time it was a woman's face, or worse—  
The seeming needs of my fool-driven land;  
Now nothing but comes readier to the hand  
Than this accustomed toil.<sup>5</sup>

The apparently aged outlook of 'The New Faces' is typical, then, of much of Yeats's work written at that time. He had published his *Collected Works* in 1908; his new style, bare and bleak as yet, had not attained its full powers. Synge, whom he had so greatly admired, for whose work he had braved the Dublin rowdies, was dead; he was not wholly in sympathy with the plays produced in the Abbey after 1912:

Not the theatre we set out to create . . . but the first doing of something for which the world is ripe, something that will be done all the world over and done more and more perfectly: the making articulate of all the dumb classes each with its own knowledge of the world, its own dignity, but all objective with the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Its first appearance was in *Seven Poems and a Fragment* (Cuala Press, 1922).

<sup>3</sup> At present in the possession of Mrs. W. B. Yeats.

<sup>4</sup> *Collected Poems*, p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.



objectivity of the office and the workshop, of the newspaper and the street, of mechanism and of politics.<sup>1</sup>

The earlier disgust aroused in him by the pettiness of the 'patriots' who had clamoured against *The Playboy of the Western World* in 1907 was strengthened by the controversy over the Lane pictures which spurred him into voicing his dislike of prevalent politics:

Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave<sup>2</sup>

Despite the demise of romantic Ireland Yeats was far from feeling that he was himself on the threshold of death. Thoughts on Lady Gregory's age would not have suggested that his own death was near; rather the reverse. When he first met Lady Gregory he was thirty-one, and she seemed middle-aged to him:

Lady Gregory, as I first knew her, was a plainly dressed woman of forty-five without obvious good looks, except the charm that comes from strength, intelligence and kindness.<sup>3</sup>

When he wrote 'The New Faces' he was forty-seven, and, viewed from his middle age, Lady Gregory now seemed old. Indeed he almost regarded Lady Gregory as older than she was in reality, if we consider his late poem 'Beautiful Lovely Things',<sup>4</sup> where he wrote inaccurately (though with a perhaps pardonable poetic exaggeration) of 'her eightieth winter approaching' when her age could not have exceeded, at most, seventy-three.<sup>5</sup>

The lofty strain and romantic setting of 'The New Faces' does not make it 'a declaration of abiding love'. Yeats paid tribute to Lady Gregory in similar fashion in other poems, such as 'Coole and Ballylee, 1931':

We were the last romantics—chose for theme  
Traditional sanctity and loveliness;  
Whatever's written in what poets name  
The book of the people; whatever most can bless  
The mind of man or elevate a rhyme.<sup>6</sup>

There are two poems in *The Green Helmet* (1910) which express appreciation of Lady Gregory's work and tell how much her friendship meant to the poet. We may ask why, if these poems were published in 1910, 'The New Faces' was withheld from publication for ten years after its composition. Mrs. W. B. Yeats suggests that Yeats kept the poem back for reasons

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Yeats, Letter to Lady Gregory quoted by J. Hone, *W. B. Yeats 1865-1939* (London, 1942), p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Poems*, p. 120.

<sup>4</sup> *Last Poems and Plays*, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> This information is from Mrs. W. B. Yeats.

<sup>3</sup> *Dramatis Personae*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Collected Poems*, p. 275.

of tact. These reasons may not be obvious without an examination of the background of the two previous poems.

The first of these, 'A Friend's Illness', illustrates further Yeats's feelings for Lady Gregory:

Sickness brought me this  
Thought, in that scale of his:  
Why should I be dismayed  
Though flame had burned the whole  
World, as it were a coal,  
Now I have seen it weighed  
Against a soul?<sup>1</sup>

The entries in Yeats's diary for 1909,<sup>2</sup> in which the poem is written, are worth considering, for they reveal the process of poetic creation at work under the stimulus of the poet's concern for his friend. The first entry on this subject begins:

Feb. 4. This morning I got a letter telling me of Lady Gregory's illness. I did not recognise her son's writing at first and my mind wandered, I suppose because I am not well. I thought my mother was ill and that my sister was asking me to come at once; then I remembered my mother died years ago and that more than kin was at stake. She has been to me mother, friend, sister and brother. I cannot realise the world without her—she brought to my wavering thoughts steadfast nobility. All the day the thought of losing her is like a conflagration in the rafters. Friendship is all the house I have.

On 6 February the Diary continues: 'Lady Gregory better but writes in pencil that "she very nearly slipped away".' This entry goes on to praise Lady Gregory's work. This section, numbered 50, can be found in *Estrangement*. Section 51 contains one sentence: 'Of Lady Gregory one can say what Shakespeare or another said "she died every day she lived".' There follows the text of the poem, section 52. It was written out three times, the third being the final version of the poem. The changes are adjectival and insignificant. Section 53 continues:

All Wednesday I heard Castiglione's phrase ringing in my memory 'Never be it spoken without tears, the Duchess is dead'—that slight phrase which coming as it did among the numbering of his dead has often moved me till my eyes dimmed; and I feel all his sorrow as though one saw the worth of life fade for ever.

There was nothing in 'A Friend's Illness' to prevent Yeats publishing it, and it probably pleased Lady Gregory that he included it in *The Green*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> Some extracts from this *Diary* were published in *Estrangement* (Cuala Press, 1926). I am indebted to Mrs. W. B. Yeats for permission to read and quote from the unpublished portion.

*Helmet.* This volume contained another allusion to the possible death of Lady Gregory in 'These are the clouds':

These are the clouds about the fallen sun,  
The majesty that shuts his burning eye:  
The weak lay hand on what the strong has done,  
Till that be tumbled that was lifted high  
And discord follow upon unison,  
And all things at one common level lie.  
And therefore, friend, if your great race were run  
And these things came, so much the more thereby  
Have you made greatness your companion,  
Although it be for children that you sigh:  
These are the clouds about the fallen sun,  
The majesty that shuts his burning eye.<sup>1</sup>

In these lines Yeats was not so much concerned with Lady Gregory's ultimate death as with the danger that the Land agitation might bring about the downfall of Coole, and the long continuity of culture that it represented. (This poem should be compared with the more direct statement of 'Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation',<sup>2</sup> also included in *The Green Helmet*.)

There was no likelihood of Yeats offending Lady Gregory by including in his volume of 1910 a second poem which made mention of the possibility of her dying, since she *had* nearly died at that time. But to publish his poem written in 1912 would have seemed to Yeats's sensitive conscience an unnecessary reopening of a subject which might have troubled Lady Gregory, even though he was praising her, because he had not now the immediate theme of her illness on which to base his thoughts, and might even seem to be commenting upon her age. It was likely, at the time of his writing 'The New Faces', that Lady Gregory would die before him; but his assertion that:

Neither catalpa tree nor scented lime  
Should hear my living feet . . .

was not so much uttered in a spirit of accurate prophecy<sup>3</sup> as in his desire to pass beyond the sense of personal loss which he knew Lady Gregory's death would bring, by considering their friendship and its achievement: 'Where we wrought that shall break the teeth of Time.'

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Poems*, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Since Robert Gregory, Lady Gregory's son, had not yet been killed in action in Italy (v. 'An Irish Airman foresees His Death', *Collected Poems*, p. 152) and there was every reason to suppose that he would inherit and maintain Coole, and offer to entertain Yeats there. At this time the poet had not bought the nearby tower at Ballylee in which he later lived.

## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

### 'THE TWA CORBIES'

THE Scottish ballad, 'The Twa Corbies' (and to a less extent its English counterpart, 'The Three Ravens') is unusual among ballads because the theme of human tragedy is presented as a conversation between carrion crows. The presumption is that the writer deliberately, if peculiarly, put this ballad into this form of a dialogue between carrion crows solely to present the theme in a form different from that usually chosen by ballad-writers.

There are, however, other Scottish rhymes concerning carrion crows which reveal a more certain origin for the form of this ballad. An item in Robert Chambers's *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, reprinted below from the third edition, 1847, p. 165, discloses that Scottish rustics and shepherds formerly created simple conversation-pieces between crows. The bases of the two dialogues recorded by Chambers are: (1) the habit of crows to 'converse' with each other; (2) their voracity, from which it is assumed that their 'conversation' is always about carrion, where it is to be found, and its degree of succulence; (3) attempts to reproduce the staccato-effect of the croaking; (4) the belief that the harsh croaking betokens malicious intentions, especially towards man.

#### The Corbie

The rapacious and unsocial character of the carrion crow, and the peculiar sounds of its voice, have given rise to curious notions respecting it among the rustic classes. The lonely shepherd who overhears a pair croaking behind a neighbouring hillock or enclosure amuses his fancy by forming regular dialogues out of their conversation—thus, for instance:

A hoggie dead! a hoggie dead! a hoggie dead!  
Oh where? oh where? oh where?  
Down i' e' park! down i' e' park! down i' e' park!  
Is't fat? is't fat? is't fat?  
Come try! come try! come try!

So in Galloway; but thus in Tweeddale:

Sekito says, there's a hogg dead!  
Where? where?  
Up the burn! up the burn!  
Is't fat? is't fat?  
't's a' creesh! 't's a' creesh!

The origin of 'The Twa Corbies' is now clearer. The story is told by a man 'walking all alane' who heard two corbies talking. One asked where they should dine to-day: the other says, 'behind yon auld fail dyke', and

describes the dead body of the knight which will be their 'dinner sweet'. One will eat his white neck, the other his 'bonny blue een', and they will take his hair to thatch the nest.

This ballad is thus a development of the Scottish rustic habit of 'interpreting the conversation' of carrion crows. In this literary development the staccato-effect, reproduced in the verses recorded by Chambers, was sacrificed for the sake of presenting a story told through the melancholy reaction of the listener to the dialogue. The crows are thus deprived of the note of croaking triumph seen in Chambers's two poems, and the note of human melancholy prevails.

The link between the rustic rhymes and the ballad does not prove that the latter was written by a rustic; the finish appears to preclude that possibility. It only reveals that the writer was acquainted with this particular rustic habit of forming rhymes to the sound of the croaking of crows, and developed it consciously.

DOUGLAS HAMER

#### MATTHEW ARNOLD AND A LIBERAL MINISTER, 1880-5

IN the correspondence of A. J. Mundella (1825-97) which has come into the possession of the University of Sheffield there are eight interesting and hitherto unnoticed letters from Matthew Arnold.<sup>1</sup> They help to show the influence that Matthew Arnold wielded over one who was, as Vice-President of the Education Committee of the Privy Council, the virtual equivalent of the Minister of Education to-day. They explain, too, the sudden change in Arnold's fortunes in 1883, when he not only received a pension, but permission to travel on a lecture-tour to America.

We know from G. W. E. Russell's edition of Arnold's letters that the man of letters and the politician were favourably impressed by each other. They met in September 1880 at Pontresina, in a hotel by the Roseg glacier, and lunched together. On their way back they walked together in the rain, and Arnold, 'pressing several things with regard to education' upon Mundella, was himself impressed, and wrote home: 'He is very anxious to do right, and I think I have more chance of having influence with him than with any Vice-President we have had.'<sup>2</sup> The impression remained the following day when he wrote again: 'Mundella makes himself so pleasant, and I am sure, as I said to Sandford, that nowhere else in Europe is there to be found

<sup>1</sup> There are four addressed to A. J. Mundella dated 4 Aug. 1883, 14 Oct. 1885, 6 Nov. 1885, and 3 Jan. 1886. Another four, dated 6 March 1882, 17 May 1882, 2 Nov. 1885, and 4 Nov. 1885, are addressed to Mundella's daughter, Miss Maria Theresa Mundella. During the whole period their personal contact with each other at official functions, parties, or through common friends like Sir M. Grant-Duff, continued.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Matthew Arnold 1848-1888*, ed. G. W. E. Russell (London, 1895), ii. 174.

a Minister exhorting his subordinate official to write more poetry.<sup>1</sup> The friendship between Mundella as the minister, Sandford the permanent secretary of the Education Department, and Arnold the doyen of the inspectorate, lasted for the next five years. Mundella and Arnold, in particular, transcended the limits of official positions, and Arnold became a friend of the Mundella family, accepting invitations to leave Cobham which he would normally refuse.

Mundella lived up to his promise. He set up a committee to revise the harsh code of 'payment by results' that dominated the elementary school and Matthew Arnold served on it in the last six months of the year 1881. He extended the power of 'the State', enforcing compulsion to attend school, and giving State aid to the two new Welsh University Colleges. He was all activity, and Arnold, writing to Miss Mundella in March 1882 enclosing his newly published *Irish Essays*, said:

I ought to send it to your father, but then, he is so very busy I send the volume to you, one of my best readers, instead. Make him read some of the essays, and do not be frightened yourself at their ever-recurring topic of public schools for the middle-classes. Think of the 'upper ten-thousand' of Sheffield and their wants.<sup>2</sup>

The allusion to Mundella's constituency was an apt one. Eight years before, Chamberlain received a red herring on the forehead, and four years before Mundella had been noisily censured at a gathering which could well have contained the 'upper ten-thousand'.

As the tempo of reform slowed in 1883, an opportunity came for Arnold's release from 'the dance of death in an elementary school'. As the new code came into operation, he could be spared, and he wrote to Mundella on 4 August of that year to express his gratitude for his release:

I am sure I am not wrong in attributing in great measure to your good offices the full and frank permission which I have received to take my desired leave of absence, at a moment when, from what I had heard of opposition at the Treasury, I had abandoned all expectation of it. Many, many thanks for this fresh proof of your active kindness.

Arnold's suggestions became more immediately practicable in 1885, when a general election necessitated Mundella addressing his Sheffield constituents on educational policy. Arnold wrote to him on 14 October 1885, a week before Mundella spoke:

There is a good opportunity to speak on middle-class education and nobody takes it. Look at my reports in the minutes for 1878-9 p. 468, and for 1882-3

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. ii. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Irish Essays* (London, 1882) was a collection of articles written by Arnold in the previous three years for the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Fortnightly*, and the *Cornhill*. It included 'Ecce, Convertimur ad Gentes', in which he declared that the existing middle-class schools were 'socially and intellectually, the most inadequate that fall to the lot of any middle class among the civilised nations of Europe'.



p. 225. My foreign reports you know. Look also at my *Mixed Essays* p. 143 and my *Irish Essays* p. 129.

I shall be glad to give you either or both of these volumes if I have not given them to you already which I ought to have done.

To map out the ground, to determine what trust funds are properly available, and to provide buildings, is what we might even now put forward as fitting to be done by the State.

Mundella followed this advice, and in his big speech on 21 October 1885 advocated State control of endowments, in order to create secondary schools for the middle and lower classes. Some of his periods were pure Arnold, like 'This beneficent action of the State acting in its corporate capacity will be a refining influence of immense value for the whole of the community'.<sup>1</sup> Mundella's speech was the delight of the Liberals, both the Marquis of Hartington and Joseph Chamberlain writing to congratulate him.<sup>2</sup> The revival of interest in education caused the Conservative Government to select Arnold to travel abroad once more to inquire into free education. Again he wrote to Mundella, this time asking for guidance instead of offering it. His letter on 6 November 1885 was written only because he could not see Mundella personally, as the politician was travelling to Bradford to speak for Arnold's brother-in-law W. E. Forster, who was ill:

I am going with a perfectly open mind. At the present moment I am against the abolition of school fees in our country, but this is not for the sake of the voluntary schools at all. I am going to Berlin first, then to Saxony. I had already determined on Chemnitz because of what you had formerly said of its schools. Then I shall go to Lucerne and of course Zurich.

Do you think it really important for me to go to Bavaria if I am pressed for time?

I start on Tuesday and must get my German and Swiss information by Christmas. I shall go to Paris for a fortnight after the Christmas holidays. . . .

The interaction of the man of vision with the man of action is interesting to watch, for Mundella quoted Arnold right up to his last speech in the House in June 1897. Arnold might declare that 'practical politicians and men of the world are apt rather to resent the incursion of a man of letters into the field of politics';<sup>3</sup> but in one quarter his writings were received with sympathy and with endeavours to translate them into practical politics.

W. H. G. ARMYTAGE

<sup>1</sup> *Sheffield Independent*, 22 Oct. 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Chamberlain wrote the next day (23 Oct.): 'I have read your most excellent speech in the *Sheffield Independent* with great pleasure. Those d——d London papers have not given a single decent report. I feared it would be so but it is really too bad. I suggest you write a letter to the *Times*, recapitulating the chief arguments and drop a line to Buckle. It is really important that your view should be known and fairly considered.'

<sup>3</sup> *Irish Essays* (London, 1882), p. i.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF *GHISMONDA*

THE EDITOR,  
*The Review of English Studies.*

Sir,

In his careful and constructive review of my edition of *Ghismonda* (*R.E.S.* xxiii [1947], 174-5), Dr. Harold F. Brooks touches on the problem of the date and authorship of the play. I now realize that the allusion to Indian sun-worship may well have been suggested by some earlier work than *The Indian Queen* (1664) or *The Indian Emperor* (1665). Thus Dr. F. S. Boas has drawn attention to a passage in *The Mask of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn* (performed 15 February 1613) which admonishes the princes of Virginia to renounce this cult.<sup>1</sup> In addition, one may recall the words of Helena in *All's Well*, 1. iii. 210-13:

Indian-like,  
Religious in mine error, I adore  
The sun, that looks upon his worshipper,  
But knows of him no more.

This passage would account for the reference in *Ghismonda*, and the influence of Shakespeare seems, all the more probable because of the dramatist's familiarity with *Othello* which Dr. Brooks has so clearly demonstrated.

There is, therefore, no textual evidence to support a date after the Restoration, and I have come to the conclusion that the play must be assigned to an earlier period. This reopens the question: 'Who was the author?' Hugh Williams is a possibility. When preparing my edition, I did establish that the records of his diocese contained no specimen of his handwriting. Owing to war conditions, I could not carry the inquiry further but now that public records are again available, it may be possible to decide whether the MS. is in his autograph.

Yours faithfully,  
HERBERT G. WRIGHT

<sup>1</sup> *American Scenes, Tudor to Georgian, in the English Literary Mirror* (London, 1944), p. 8.

## REVIEWS

**The Venerable Bede: His Spiritual Teachings.** By SISTER M. THOMAS AQUINAS CARROLL. Pp. ix+270. (The Catholic University of America: Studies in Medieval History. New Ser., vol. ix.) Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1946. (No price given.)

Theologians and historians have long recognized Bede's importance as a teacher of outstanding saintliness and prodigious scholarship, who was to influence greatly not only the Carolingian Renaissance of the eighth century but also the Western Church throughout the medieval period. Yet to the general reader Bede is known as the author of one book—the *Ecclesiastical History*. Even by more specialized students the twelve volumes of his collected works have never been exhaustively explored. Chief attention has been given to the historical material. Bede's exegetical works, which he himself considered most important, and which were certainly the most influential in the intellectual life of the middle ages, have been strangely ignored.

Proposing to describe Bede's scheme of the spiritual life from a comprehensive reading of his forty-one authentic works, Sister M. Thomas Aquinas Carroll set out to satisfy a real need. It is evident from the start that she was well equipped for such a task, being educated in the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and with a foundation of wide reading and deep sympathy for her subject. Her method is scholarly. She presents her statements with scrupulous detachment, corroborating each by a quotation or reference. Such weight of evidence is convincing, but it results in a clumsy preponderance of footnotes, 1,592 to 258 pages. The authoress herself rarely obtrudes, and then generally in a pertinent comment or brief conclusion.

The six chapters of this book describe in logical sequence the factors in Bede's own spiritual development, his conception of the Church, his teaching on the sacraments, on sin and its purgation, on incentives to goodness, on good works, and on the life of virtue. Each chapter is continuously written and pleasantly readable, a noteworthy achievement when it is realized that the quotations are culled from commentaries on literally hundreds of scattered verses of scripture in dozens of treatises. Only occasionally does one suspect that the authoress has searched out possible quotations to illustrate a commonly accepted framework of teaching, as from her anxious emphasis on passages from Bede which tend to support such controversial tenets as that of Transubstantiation, the supreme authority of the Pope, the sacrament of private penance, or from her surprise that she finds no support in Bede's teaching for belief in the Immaculate Conception.

Many of the important doctrines and liturgical practices of the Church were not defined until the late Middle Ages, and Bede occupies an important position in the history of thought between the Fathers and the great theologians of the Scholastic Age. Sister Carroll's book offers interesting information about Anglo-Saxon belief and usage in the eighth century. Bede, for example, was one of the

clearest and fullest of the early authorities on Purgatory. His writings prove what value was imputed to Extreme Unction. He gives evidence of the Reservation of the Sacrament. He stresses the merit of lay-confession, and of prayers for the dead. Of particular interest is Bede's recognition of only five sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, and Preaching. No Wycliffite in the fourteenth century or Evangelical of modern times has stressed the spiritual value of preaching more than he.

Students of Old and Middle English religious literature will find in Sister Carroll's study of Bede's spiritual teaching a useful book of reference. The breadth and depth of Bede's doctrine impels one to modify the conception of English Christianity derived from contemporary Anglo-Saxon religious poetry. Bede's attitude towards the Virgin Mother, his frequent meditations upon the physical sufferings of Christ anticipate by centuries the devotion expressed in the Middle English lyric. Bede repeatedly teaches wise moderation in ascetical practices, and mortification of the spirit rather than of the flesh, instruction much commended when it is repeated in *The Ancrene Riwle* and the works of Rolle and Hilton. Like Hilton, Bede proclaims the value of the 'mixed life'. The holiness of the gift of tears, a gift so amusing and yet so exasperating to the modern reader of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, is explained and upheld in Bede's treatment of penitence.

Sister Carroll wisely limits her range. She does not attempt to set forth Bede's teaching on such basic articles of the faith as the doctrine of the Trinity or the Incarnation, for his practical guidance to an active spiritual life is uppermost in her mind. She does not try to show how far Bede was a pioneer in his teaching. Nor does she presume to interpret Bede's character, though he emerges as a living personality from her pages, heir to the two streams of Roman and Celtic Christianity which had met and blended in England, a typical eighth-century monk and priest in his attitude towards the scriptures, science, and the classics, humanly weak in his indignation and wounded pride when charged with heresy, saintly in the rare humility which, as Sister Carroll demonstrates, characterized all his teaching. Sister Carroll's book is of value to the student of medieval thought because she rarely attempts to force her subject-matter into the pattern of later religious teaching. Because her collection of quotations is rich, authoritative, and practical, and her synthesis lucid and persuasive, her work has, in addition, the quality of a manual of doctrinal and devotional instruction.

PHYLLIS HODGSON

**A Sermon Preached at Lincoln's Inn by John Donne.** Edited by GEORGE REUBEN POTTER. Pp. viii + 72. California: Stanford University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1946. \$2.00; 12s. net.

The sermon on Psalm xxxviii. 9 here edited by Professor Potter formed one of a series preached by Donne during his Readership at Lincoln's Inn. It should evidently have been included with the group of sermons upon this Psalm which were published in *Fifty Sermons*, 1649, but for some reason it was omitted and

is, in consequence, one of the very few of Donne's sermons to be preserved in manuscript alone. A manuscript formerly in the possession of Professor Dowden contains one text of it; this has been twice printed in the present century, first in facsimile by Mr. Wilfred Merton and secondly by Mrs. Simpson as an appendix to her *Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, 1924. Other texts, not apparently greatly dissimilar, exist in the Lothian and Payne-Collier MSS. In 1932, however, Harvard College Library acquired from Mr. P. J. Dobell a manuscript of Donne's prose and verse (Nor. 4506) which was found to contain a much more carefully transcribed version of the sermon, and it is this new text which forms the basis of Professor Potter's edition. He has thus done notable service in rescuing Donne from misrepresentation by showing conclusively that what had appeared from the Dowden MS. to be poor work on the part of the author was in fact only slovenly copying on the part of a transcriber who, besides obscuring the sense of some passages by alterations of his own, had confused the argument and damaged the structure of the whole by misplacing one entire sheet. Such is the havoc that scribes in haste may cause; and Professor Potter, without assuming the maker of Nor. 4506 to be infallible, has followed him wherever possible in preference to his frailer brother, and has given us a text which is certainly closer to Donne's original wording than those so far available to us.

Even in its restored form this is not one of Donne's best sermons. Except where he is drawing his familiar distinction between God's foreknowledge of man's sin and predestination, there is little of the dramatic power which made up his greatness as an orator. Nor is there much emotional appeal; the most moving passage is that in which he exhorts his hearers to the practice, instead of a hypocritical and empty profession, of charity ('house Christ where he is harborless'). But the structure has the logic and clarity which are the necessary foundation of great dramatic and emotional effects, and is therefore characteristic of Donne's work, however plain the building erected upon it in this case may happen to be. And there is much in the detail that is characteristic too—pieces of penetrating observation reminiscent of the Donne of the satires rather than of the religious poems. The sermon also reflects Donne's gift—the gift of a poet—for turning an immediate occasion into something of general significance: Professor Potter interestingly points out that the appeal for charity in practice, not in theory, had reference to the scheme for a new chapel at Lincoln's Inn for which funds were only slowly being raised, but there is nothing in Donne's phrasing to confine it to this alone.

Professor Potter's edition is most carefully edited and annotated. It is intended to be easy for the modern reader to follow and understand while at the same time providing the scholar with the data necessary for more specialized study. The spelling and punctuation have been modernized but full textual notes have been provided. This seems to me a laudable compromise likely to please all parties. It is only over his 'Explanatory notes' that one may perhaps be inclined to quarrel with Professor Potter, for these are largely concerned with the sources of Donne's quotations and give very little help towards the understanding of his meaning. Readers unfamiliar with seventeenth-century English spelling and punctuation are unlikely to find such obsolete phrases as 'taken with the manner' readily

intelligible, nor will they be at ease with Donne's Latin. In themselves the notes are scholarly and learned, but they seem inconsistent with the editor's professed purpose; and the people for whose sake the text was modernized in appearance may justly complain that they satisfy the scholarly and learned alone.

ROSEMARY FREEMAN

**Milton's Paradise with Reference to the Hexameral Background.** By SISTER MARY IRMA CORCORAN. Pp. xvi+149. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press; Chicago: The Argus Press, 1945. (No price given.)

This dissertation, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a valuable and opportune piece of work. Each succeeding generation of critics has inclined to interpret *Paradise Lost* from its own point of view and in connexion with its own interests and problems, but the time has come when scholars begin to see the necessity of putting it back into its own period in order to secure its poetic truth. This means treating it as a religious poem of the middle seventeenth century, written by one who though a rationalist was yet a religious rationalist of the old order, one who was versed in and preoccupied with the whole tradition of Christian thought just before it gave way to the secular outlook of our modern era. It is in this sense that Mr. C. S. Lewis has rightly contended that *Paradise Lost* is in the central tradition of catholic Christianity and that 'Milton's thought, when purged of its theology, does not exist'. Sister Corcoran's precise subject is Milton's Paradise and its relation to hexaemic literature: 'My investigation has, I hope, placed the various elements of the hexameral tradition in the perspective in which Milton saw them, has established Milton's concept of the nature and end of man as fundamentally religious rather than narrowly humanistic, and has disentangled some of the threads of pre-Reformation Christian orthodoxy and Protestant creeds from which he wove his system.' Her method is to present, mainly by quotation from sources, the historical views on each point of conjecture or belief about the Garden of Eden before presenting the relevant passages in Milton; this results in an orderly objective exposition, with the minimum of disturbing commentary or argument on her part. In her first chapter she surveys the whole mass of hexaemic literature, but in the body of her work she relies mainly on Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin, quoting, however, from many other sources for particular points or as likely proximate sources for Milton.

Milton starts from the orthodox belief 'that unfallen man enjoyed upon earth a three-fold Paradise: an external garden of delight, a perfect body attuned to its harmonious surroundings, and a Paradise of perfections, natural or supernatural, within his soul'. Milton's external Paradise is conventional, being compounded of the perfections of the classical and patristic gardens that preceded it; it is with the nature of original man rather than with his environment that he is really concerned. And it is with the study of the unfallen Adam, Sister Corcoran insists, 'that the final interpretation not only of Milton's Paradise but of the whole epic must begin'. One can agree to this, especially as against the criticism



that slights the importance of the scenes in Paradise and regards them as a mere *tour de force*. Yet Sister Corcoran's special thesis perhaps makes her forget, or at least not sufficiently stress, that Milton's subject is the Fall, that the crucial question for him is the relation of fallen to unfallen man, and that his view of this relationship determines his view of the state of primal innocence. She shows how closely Milton works to the traditional material but does not bring out so clearly the divergent miltonic point of view. Milton, preoccupied as he is with man's present state, can only see Adam and Eve in their state of innocence as 'natural' man and woman, like to their descendants in all their capacities and functions; the one difference between them is the fact of sin, and sin is not irremediable. This 'human' attitude is seen most plainly in his treatment of sex, but it is discernible at every point. The thorny problem of whether or how far this point of view leads him away from Christian orthodoxy I am not sufficient of a theologian to dare handle; but it is this, I should say, that distinguishes his Christian doctrine, gives poetic life to his vision of Paradise, and constitutes the dramatic unity of the poem.

B. A. WRIGHT

**Milton's Paradise Lost: A Commentary on the Argument.** By JOHN S.

DIEKHOFF. Pp. viii+162. New York: Columbia University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1946. 11s. 6d. net.

It is a testimony to the vitality of Milton criticism and to the eminence of Milton's longest poem among his other works that this is the third book on *Paradise Lost* to appear within six years. Nor does Diekhoff seriously encroach on the earlier volumes of C. S. Lewis and Bush. Unlike them, he is not concerned with defence. His main concern is to expound Milton's conscious design or argument, 'what Milton's conception of virtuous action is, what the problem and what the obligation of the human individual is, what the reward for perseverance and what the penalty for failure'. Prefixed to this exposition is a demonstration that Milton is a rhetorician and that he takes sides, and often it is a claim that Milton's doctrine accords with the four freedoms so much advertised to-day.

Diekhoff perforce discusses matters that have been discussed before, but there is nothing stale in his treatment. On the contrary, he has thought out the whole matter for himself and has set forth the shape of Milton's argument with care, subtle perception, good sense, and in the briefest space compatible with clarity. He gives full weight to what others have said, but keeps his independence, and has a happy gift of making things plain by a slight correction. Diekhoff begins with a chapter on the evil of Satan, and though in a sense he repeats current refutations of the Satanists (now a dwindling number) he does define Satan's evil with new closeness and accuracy. Satan arguing with Eve about the need to know evil as well as good appears at first sight to use the identical doctrine found in *Areopagitica*. But this doctrine applies only to a state where sin has already entered. Before the fall it was false and Satan knew it. Diekhoff analyses the precise guilt of Adam and Eve and the stages by which they yielded to temptation. In dealing with the problem of how far the pair stand generally

for mankind and separately for man and woman, he might have gone farther and recognized that Eve and Adam (among other things) stand for the traditional division of the human mind into understanding and will respectively. Eve sins mainly because she does not understand the full issue; Adam understands, but his will is corrupt. Diekhoff makes a good point when he proves that the temptation Satan provided was very powerful indeed. In dealing with God's justice Diekhoff shows great acumen in defining the relative sinfulness of fallen angels and fallen man, and the corresponding severity of their doom. Adam and Eve sinned grievously by subordinating a greater to a smaller good, yet, unlike Satan, they never revolted against good itself. Diekhoff's solution of the *felix culpa* problem or whether Paradise was or was not well lost is masterly. There are, he points out, three, not two, points of comparison. The two usually assumed are Paradise before the Fall and the new state of grace attainable through Christ after it. But there is a third: the progressive state of excellence obtainable if Adam and Eve had remained sinless. Milton takes all three into account, and though he believes the second state better than the first, he does not say it is better than the third or that Adam and Eve were right to have acted in a way that lost them Paradise.

As a whole Diekhoff's is the best exposition of Milton's argument there is.

The last chapter is a mistake. Diekhoff is on safe ground dealing with Milton's conscious intention. When it comes to his relevance to-day, meaning in a wider sense comes in. The abstracted argument is irrelevant: nothing but the total material out of which the argument was abstracted can count. It may be that Milton is wholly valid to-day; but not on the grounds given in this book.

E. M. W. TILLYARD

**Print and Privilege at Oxford to the year 1700.** By JOHN JOHNSON and STRICKLAND GIBSON. Pp. xii+212. London: Oxford University Press, Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1946. 42s. net.

As the title implies two threads run through this history of printing at Oxford, the establishment of the learned press itself, and the various expedients adopted to provide that press with financial resources. Archbishop Laud clearly envisaged the learned press as an integral part of the University, but no practical steps to realize his vision were taken during his lifetime. And despite the zeal of Samuel Clarke, whose achievements as Architypographus are here engagingly depicted, it was left to Bishop Fell to give the press a reputation for learning which lasted far beyond his own lifetime.

To publish works of scholarship is an honourable but rarely a profitable undertaking. The royal charter of 1636 therefore gave to the University the privilege of printing books of any kind covered by the charter of the Stationers' Company. Oxford was thus admitted to share in those rich monopolies (reputed to yield 12½ per cent. per annum) the printing of school books, almanacks, and Bibles. The story of the exercise of this right, here reconstructed from the archives of the University and the records of the Stationers' Company, is absorbing, even exciting, reading. At first the University was content, by covenants of forbear-

ance, to abstain from printing in return for a payment by the Stationers' Company of £200 a year. But to Fell privileges were rights to be exercised and in 1671 we have the spectacle of three heads of houses and a future secretary of state going into publishing and paying the University £200 for the privilege. Unfortunately Fell and Company were unsuccessful. Their school books did not go well and after publishing one almanack of which 20,000 copies were sold they came to terms with the Stationers' Company. The exercise of the Bible privilege led to a price-cutting war which exhausted the capital of the adventurers. Their own best-sellers were pirated in London, probably with the connivance of the Company.

Fell was therefore compelled to sub-let the Bible privilege to four London stationers who were prepared to fight the Stationers' Company. Of these the most important was Moses Pitt, a man of large ideas and varied interests. He was one of the first to engage in the new and profitable trade of selling books by auction. He offered Robert Hooke £200 to supervise his famous atlas. Unfortunately he also speculated badly in building sites and ended in Newgate. It was left to Thomas Guy and Peter Parker to sustain the struggle with the Company. It was a ruthless fight, with prices so cut that the Dutch were forced out of the Bible market, and with constant threats of legal action on either side. The University was, indeed, only saved from a *quo warranto* by the flight of James II. Finally the University tired of its own lessees and in 1692 let the Bible privilege to the Stationers' Company itself. The authors naturally do not pursue to London the vendetta between the Company and the interlopers, but it is interesting to note that in 1693 the latter were bitterly opposing the renewal of the Licensing Act. They claimed that any confirmation of the privileges of the Stationers' Company would mean an increase of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. in the price of Bibles now that the Company's monopoly had been re-established. In point of fact the University struck a very hard bargain in 1692, for the Company agreed to buy the stock of the learned *imprimerie*, and was compelled to raise fresh capital for the purpose. There was no hope that such favourable terms could long continue and in 1698 the University was compelled to sign a much less advantageous agreement.

The story is thus one of failure, and the underlying economic causes which made failure inevitable emerge clearly, even if one does not altogether accept the authors' thesis that the late seventeenth century was a time unpropitious for the book trade. To challenge the Stationers' Company in its own field would have been a brave undertaking in London. To do so from Oxford in so centralized a trade as publishing was foolhardy. Oxford indeed had the great advantage of river transport, but the long journey up the Thames added considerably to the prime cost of paper and must also have increased selling costs. Added to this was a constant shortage of capital and too rigid a publishing policy. It was only with Thomas Hearne that the possibilities of the limited and high-priced edition became apparent.

It is indeed profoundly to be hoped that the authors will continue their story down to Hearne's day and beyond it. For this work stands worthily on the shelf beside Madan. Its interest goes beyond Oxford. It writes a new chapter in the

history of the Stationers' Company. But more than this, the authors know, as from the inside, what publishing meant in the seventeenth century, and their wise comment illumines every aspect of the book trade.

LAURENCE HANSON

**Voltaire, Dryden, and Heroic Tragedy.** By TRUSTEN WHEELER RUSSELL. Pp. x+178. New York: Columbia University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1946. \$2.50; 10s. 6d. net.

This work, which has its origins in the Columbia University Press, excellently covers the theory of tragedy current in England and France between 1650 and 1750. The ground is, of course, familiar. The neo-classical insistence on the drama being considered a form of epic—with all that was implied by the neo-classical idea of the epic—determined the form the tragedy of the time should take, with, to name the greatest figures, Dryden at one end and Voltaire at the other. Mr. Russell's investigation, if it does not reveal anything startlingly new, deals very thoroughly and expertly with the whole matter, and trenches on some interesting side issues. It is only to be wished that he had paid a little attention to Fontenelle's impish objections to the too-fervent search for moral allegory in the epic, especially Homer's. Mr. Russell himself seldom makes a critical judgement; he is content to state things as they were without intruding his own predilections.

Probably what will be of most interest to the English student is the portion given more specifically to Voltaire, especially the chapter where the English influence is in debate. Mr. Russell comes down decisively on the side of those who argue that it was Dryden and not Shakespeare whom Voltaire followed, supporting his arguments from the extracts appearing in Voltaire's various commonplace books, notably the *Sottisier* to be found in the Voltaire Library at Leningrad, and the *English Notebook*; it is well known, moreover, that *Alzire* is largely derived from *The Indian Emperour*. What is more interesting to the general reader—since the influence of this upon that, of whom upon what, is so much determined by contemporary atmosphere, and so hard to disentangle—is Voltaire's own changes of attitude in attempting to establish a great school of French tragedy, in following how he turned from the Corneilles as models to Racine, but yet tried to avoid the softening effect of a love-conflict, since this weakened the element that made for virtue as well as derogating from 'admiration'.

Style, how far the tirade was justified, those *beaux vers* which distracted the attention of the audience from the real lesson of the piece, that was one problem. Then subject-matter; should it be historical or romantic, should it be ancient, national, or romantic history? That was another problem with which Voltaire struggled with ever-maintained zest and ever-widening reading. Mr. Russell shows how Voltaire, with admirable flexibility, was able to change his point of view, and by what steps his tragedy became one of situation (often too melodramatic) rather than one of character. Mr. Russell deplores this as a mistake—though Aristotle would not have—yet points out, supported by Brunetière, that the distinguishing mark of Voltairian tragedy is the 'humanitarian instinct'. It

was all a very ingenious mixture of Rapin, Dacier, and Dryden, with a few other ingredients thrown in, written in a manner to prove that the French language was in vigour as capable as the English of bearing the weight of sublimity. It only remains to be added that Mr. Russell has pursued his thesis agreeably, illustrating it copiously from the criticism of the period. BONAMY DOBRÉE

**Four Essays on Gulliver's Travels.** By ARTHUR E. CASE. Pp. x+133. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1947. \$2.00; 11s. 6d. net.

In 1938 the late Professor Arthur E. Case published an edition of *Gulliver's Travels* basing his text on Motte's first edition, 1726, 'corrected by photographic reproductions of Charles Ford's letter to Motte and his manuscript notes in his large paper copy of the *Travels*'. These corrections had been prepared by Ford in consequence of Swift's complaint that Motte had taken unwarrantable liberties, patching and altering the text, especially in the second volume. Nearly all the literal and verbal corrections were incorporated by Motte in his fourth octavo edition, 1727; but the passages which formed the chief ground of Swift's complaint remained as they were, and nothing was done to restore them till Faulkner, a Dublin printer, published an edition of the Dean's works in four volumes in 1735. Many additional changes adopted by Faulkner are suggestive of the author's hand. Nevertheless, Professor Case assigned little credit to Faulkner's edition of the *Travels*, regarding Swift's part in the venture as 'perfunctory' and many of the additional alterations as 'distinctly for the worse'. The first essay in Professor Case's last book is written in justification of the text he adopted in 1938, and in depreciation of the textual value of Faulkner's edition.

For nearly two hundred years Faulkner was ignored or looked at askance by editors. In 1922 Dr. Lucius L. Hubbard (*Bibliography of Gulliver's Travels*) adduced, in detail and with careful collations, arguments in favour of Faulkner. The present writer, in the introduction to his edition of the *Travels*, 1926, written in part before Dr. Hubbard's book came to hand, supported his advocacy. The publication of *The Letters of Swift to Ford*, 1935, edited by D. Nichol Smith, added to the evidence in favour of Faulkner; and, before and since that time, manuscript evidence and annotated volumes have brought to light corroborative detail.

In his essay Professor Case sets out fully the story of Faulkner's publication of the Dean's works in 1735 as we can follow it in Swift's letters, in those of his friends, in Faulkner's claims, and in the statements of Lord Orrery, Swift's first biographer. Whatever credit we assign to Swift's expressions of indifference and vexation, however far we discount Orrery's assertion that the author gave 'his revisal and correction' to 'every sheet' of Faulkner's volumes, a claim emphatically supported by Deane Swift with pertinent illustrations, enough remains to show that 'perfunctory' is an ill-chosen word to describe Swift's part in the publication.

Professor Case continues his argument with lists of variants, attempting to show that earlier readings are often preferable, on diverse grounds, to those of Faulkner. But there is in this kind of argument room for legitimate difference of

opinion, and the present reviewer can only say that he frequently finds himself in disagreement with Professor Case's judgement. Readings peculiar to Faulkner, which he lists as debatable or as definitely changes for the worse, may fairly be claimed as improvements.

It is a pity that Professor Case, his mind directed to a single book, leaves out of account the other volumes of Faulkner's edition of Swift's *Works*. He has much to explain away, if he confines himself to *Gulliver's Travels* only, but external evidence against him accumulates if we turn to the four volumes of 1735, and it may be added, if we turn also to the two further volumes of 1738. *Gulliver* is only one volume of a set. The others betray marked revision which may fairly be attributed to the author and to no one else. Lord Rothschild possesses a set of the Pope and Swift *Miscellanies*, four volumes, 1727-32, with corrections in the hand of Swift. In general character the Faulkner changes are suggestive of the same hand at work. Further, Faulkner adopted in his volumes manuscript revisions and corrections appearing in the *Miscellanies*. Volume I reprints a number of prose pamphlets, beginning with *Contests and Dissensions in Athens and Rome*. In the miscellany volume Swift made eighty-six verbal and literal corrections to this pamphlet. In a large proportion of instances Faulkner's text follows these changes. Or, take *A Letter concerning the Sacramental Test* in the same volume. Swift marked more than two pages for deletion, and Faulkner omits this long passage in addition to following other corrections. These illustrations, to show a following of the author's corrections, might be multiplied in the first volume. In the second volume, containing the poems, corrections appear made by Swift in the same miscellany set. A copy of the second Faulkner volume, in private hands, has corrections by Swift himself. These are of no great significance, but they do, at least, suggest that he approved Faulkner's selection and text. The hand of Swift in volume IV, which contains (with other pamphlets) the *Drapier's Letters*, can hardly be questioned. A weight of evidence, greater than there is here space to indicate, goes to prove recognition and revision, partial and irregular it may be, of Faulkner's volumes. The third volume, containing *Gulliver's Travels*, cannot be treated as if it were an independent problem. If, quite apart from any question of textual merit, this be true, then Faulkner's edition of the *Travels*, it can be claimed, contains the latest revision of the author, and an edited text based on the first edition, together with the use of Ford's emendations, can hardly assert preference.

Professor Case's second essay is occupied with Swift's geography and chronology. The time scheme, to which Swift obviously gave thought, without wholly rewarding success, is here studied in greater detail than has hitherto been attempted. The real difficulties occur in the third voyage, in which conflicting statements can be reconciled only by assumptions and arbitrary emendations. For Swift's geography the essay strives to make out a better case than previous commentators have been prepared to admit. The subject is too involved for discussion here. Professor Case's conclusion that 'only two alterations in the text of the first edition' are required seems hardly to be warranted.

The third essay, on 'Personal and Political Satire' in the *Travels*, is the best in the book, displaying discernment and balanced thought. Sir Charles Firth's



paper on *The Political Significance of 'Gulliver's Travels'* (1919) is amplified and carried to closer detail. Some differing identifications of persons and characters are also proposed. Professor Case is entitled to the claim that his interpretation of the political allegory contained in the first voyage is supported by 'the consistency and exactness with which it follows the chronology of the events which it symbolizes'. His success in showing that 'the third voyage is much more unified in purpose than has commonly been supposed' must equally be admitted. Sir Charles Firth allowed his preoccupation with the allegorical description of Irish affairs and the controversy over Wood's coinage an undue influence upon his reading of the narrative, which led him into inconsistencies. Further, it can hardly be questioned that Firth was wrong in confusing Munodi, who really represents Oxford, with Viscount Midleton, Chancellor of Ireland. As Professor Case, looking back, remarks in his fourth essay, 'the attacks upon science and history are subsidiary to a single main purpose—an attack upon folly in government'. The third essay is a valuable contribution to an understanding of the purport of the satire and the direction of Swift's thoughts and memories as he wrote the *Travels*.

The title of Professor Case's fourth essay, 'The Significance of *Gulliver's Travels*', is a little misleading, for it resolves itself largely into an analysis of the possible sources of the book, the incentives which prompted Swift to its composition, the care he bestowed upon it, and the unity of the design, each of the four voyages approaching the main problem in a different way. On these several topics, if there is room for some disagreement, Professor Case has much to say that is well considered and sound in judgement. He ends on the right note in dismissing the belief, at one time widely accepted, that Swift was a misanthrope. On the contrary he regarded himself as a social reformer, and to that end he wrote the *Travels* in the hope that they would 'wonderfully mend the world'.

If, in discussing the text and geography, Professor Case strains his argument and passes lightly over difficulties, he has in his last two essays made a contribution of singular value to a full understanding of *Gulliver's Travels*.

HAROLD WILLIAMS

**George Colman the Younger (1762-1836).** By JEREMY F. BAGSTER-COLLINS. Pp. viii + 367. New York: King's Crown Press, 1946. \$3.

When a nineteenth-century writer on the drama spoke of the tradition of high comedy as beginning with the Restoration playwrights, finding later expression in the hands of Sheridan, and carrying on its course in the plays of George Colman the Younger and of Dion Boucicault, he was presenting what no doubt is a true, if depressing, account of comedy's fate, between 1660 and 1860, in the English theatre.

George Colman the Younger was no genius, and he sought no ornate literary laurels, but in view of his position in the history of the stage he well deserves this critical examination of his life and work. Mr. Bagster-Collins has, perhaps, not succeeded in altering any established judgements either on the worth of Colman's individual plays or on the general trends of drama during that author's association

with the theatre: but he has succeeded in presenting an entertaining account of the picturesque career of this manager and concocter of successful comedy-melodramas and he has, in addition, brought forward interesting background material relating to histrionic affairs in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Mr. Bagster-Collins's work is well and carefully done, and he has been at pains to leave unturned no stone under which might lurk matter pertinent to his research. It may, however, be suggested that in one assumption he has misconstrued his evidence. Referring to *The Female Dramatist*, Colman's first play, he accuses its author of prevarication in his assertion that he had thrown the manuscript in the fire. Mr. Bagster-Collins adduces in support of his accusation the fact that 'the play exists in MS. in the Larpent Collection of the Henry E. Huntington Library'—but this collection is, or was, part of the archives of the Lord Chamberlain's office, where, under the terms of the 1737 Licensing Act, a copy of every play had to be deposited. Over that copy (which no doubt he never imagined would be unearthed) Colman had no control: presumably he was entirely accurate in his account of what happened to his own manuscript.

While no great claims may be made for the excellence of Colman's plays, it is good to know that they are not entirely forgotten. Even if we cannot now subscribe to the enthusiasm of a reviewer of 1795, who thought that they 'must remain as long as taste, sensibility, and invention have any power to delight, or claim to be gratified, amongst the first in estimation for elegance of sentiment and strength of dialogue', we may admit that he was among the worthiest of the unworthy dramatists who followed Sheridan. ALLARDYCE NICOLL

**The Centennial Edition of the Works of Sidney Lanier.** General Editor:

CHARLES R. ANDERSON. 10 vols. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1945. \$30.

The detached observer will find much that is odd in these ten volumes, but nothing so odd as this kind of writing:

O One-friend, my soul is a sea, to which you are the flowery shore: my thoughts come running shorewards, wave after wave, and climb as high as they can towards you, and bow, and then sparkle away in a death-ecstasy, as if, having revered you, their life-end was fulfilled, and nothing left them but to die. (*To a female friend.*)

Thou art a glorieole of clarified light, dwelling always around my head . . . My Subtile-Sweet Woman, how tenuous and how real thou art! I have plainly seen thee in the waving of a leaf; I have had a perfect vision of thee in the exquisite evanescent tremor of a music-tone; I have distinctly caught thy face peeping from behind a beautiful idea in my soul, like Titania half-hid in a flower. (*To his wife.*)

Lanier's letters abound in it: these are samples casually chosen. It is worth while looking at them and asking what kind of culture produced this stuff, for the answers go some way to explaining the central weakness of Sidney Lanier's work and of the literature of the American South in his day.

Behind these passages, as behind all his work, is Lanier's cult of high-flown

sentimentalism: the pursuit of the—vaguely defined—'ideal' at all costs; the rejection of all that can be associated with 'body'. One of the fullest statements of the cult is in the preposterous nonsense of the essay called *Retrospects and Prospects* which is about the battle between 'soul' and 'body' in human affairs and the present and future position of the combatants. 'Soul' is winning hands down—witness, says Lanier, the process of 'etherrealisation' that is noticeable in all the arts. One of his instances is enough: painting is in a very satisfactory state—it is turning into photography; it is advancing rapidly towards the spiritual 'simply by having lightened itself of the purely material load of colour'. This sentimentalism, these attitudes are purely literary, born of words and fed by words. They do not come from the assimilation of human experience but from the refusal of it; and from the refusal of self-awareness. The result, in prose and verse, is verbiage, rootless and undisciplined. There are literary sources for all this in German Romanticism, particularly in Jean Paul Richter and Novalis, whom Lanier followed—at a distance—in his chaotic novel *Tiger Lilies*.

Nor were Lanier's excesses checked by the restraints of a strong tradition or by the criticism of an adult and educated society. Even before the Civil War the culture of the South was hardly strong. Lanier's father shows us what the strongest values in it were. He complained, and not without reason, that there was too much 'high talk' in his son's letters and asked for more facts. We discover that he finds his son's poems unintelligible because he reads Addison, whereas Sidney reads Swinburne. We find him recommending his sons to write a satirical poem on the era of 'Reconstruction' on the model of *Hudibras*. The eighteenth century lingered. But this tradition left too much out to be of use to the younger generation in the post-war years. Nothing so valuable took its place.

And in the ruined South to which Lanier returned from the war he had to find his audience and his society in the small town, the watering-place, in a devoted family and among adoring women. He knew what he had missed. In a famous letter to Bayard Taylor he says:

I could never describe to you what a mere drought and famine my life has been, as regards that multitude of matters which I fancy one absorbs when one is in an atmosphere of art, or when one is in conversational relations with men of letters, with travellers, with persons who have either seen, or written, or done large things. Perhaps you know that with us of the younger generation in the South since the War, pretty much the whole of life has been merely not dying.

'Merely not dying.' This was true of Lanier in a special sense. Born in Macon, Georgia, in 1842, he left college, where he had graduated and was already teaching, to join the Southern forces in 1861. He was taken prisoner, and returned home in 1865, ill. Signs of tuberculosis soon showed themselves. The rest of his life was a struggle against disease and poverty. He had a wife and family to support. He was by turns hotel clerk, tutor, schoolmaster, and finally became a lawyer in his father's office. He published his novel and wrote much else, both verse and prose, sometimes finding a publisher and sometimes not. And always there were the bouts of illness, the haemorrhages, and the desperate remedies.

His life found its climax late in 1873 when he left Georgia and became first flutist in the Peabody orchestra in Baltimore. In this city, in a few hectic years, he achieved a measure of success. He was popular as a flutist, he published his main poems, he did some fairly profitable hack work for publishers, he had a success as lecturer in literature in drawing-rooms and in the Peabody Institute; and eventually, in 1879, he was appointed to a lectureship in literature in the newly founded Johns Hopkins University. He died in 1881.

One rather wishes it were possible to praise the elaborate poems of this period—'Corn', 'The Symphony', 'Psalm of the West'—which won Lanier the name of best poet of the South. This did not, unfortunately, mean much. And praise cannot really be given. Lanier had undergone the influence of most of the English poets of his time—of 'Festus' Bailey and Mrs. Browning as well as of Tennyson, Morris, and Swinburne. And his poems are invincibly second hand and second rate. Nor did all Lanier's interest in *The Science of Verse* help him very much. This is the title of a book based on lectures given in Baltimore: it has been fought over since in the endless squabbles of those who write on this subject. Other lectures are to be found in *Shakspeare and his Forerunners* and *The English Novel*. Lanier's lectures were drawing-room lectures ('The study of these sonnet-writers possesses such a dainty and unique propriety for a class of your sex that it becomes simply irresistible.'). extension lectures, intended to be popular, and must have interested and pleased their audiences. It is amazing that he managed to do so much reading during these years.

Poet, novelist, flutist, hack writer, amateur scholar—Lanier's career is not tragic but it is deeply pitiful. Frustrated by his body and the circumstance of a ruined and broken society he was more profoundly frustrated, though he did not know it, by the inadequacy of a talent that was never great enough to meet the demands he made on it. He is too small a figure to be tragic. 'I know', he said, 'through the fieriest tests of life, that I am in soul, and shall be, in life and in utterance, a great poet.' Keats was content with a more modest claim; and Arnold's triumphant response to it cannot be echoed to serve as epitaph for Lanier.

Yet the piety of the University he served has given Lanier a monument more splendid than that erected to many a greater writer. The work of the general editor of this edition and of his collaborators shows all the virtues of modern editorial scholarship: its exactitude, its care for detail, its immense patience. It is difficult to imagine that anyone will want more of Lanier than is given here or will fail to find what information he wants in the apparatus. 'Definitive'—that adjective which is the editor's last reward—can surely be invoked.

D. J. GORDON

**Towards a Mythology. Studies in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats.** By PETER URE. Pp. 120. Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946. 8s. 6d. net.

This book should be read by all serious students of Yeats's poetry. It is not equally good throughout, but then how very few books of pure literary criticism ever are, great critics being, perhaps, as Housman declared, even rarer than great

poets. One learns not to expect too much, and, above all, one learns that books of criticism one once read with almost continuous pleasure and excitement have left no trace upon one's mind or memory. If one finds a few analyses which enable one to appreciate particular poems more deeply, if one is enabled to make even a few important modifications in one's own map of a writer's aims and achievements as a whole, one is deeply grateful. There is no reader for whom Mr. Ure's very honest and unpretentious, but very sensitive and intelligent, book will not do at least this, and there are many for whom it will do a great deal more.

It might perhaps be objected that, in his Introduction and elsewhere, Mr. Ure does not establish any very clear distinction between 'mythology' and symbolism. The substance of what he has to say in his Introduction is that 'mythology' (in the poetic, not in the anthropological sense) enables a poet who is concerned rather with inwardness than with externality to translate his experience interestingly and intelligibly. Here, perhaps, he might profitably have developed his suggestive, but brief and incidental, comparison between Yeats and Rilke, as poets who have both used a kind of mythology (Mr. Macneice's remarks on the resemblances and differences between these two poets in their use of symbols is one of the most valuable things in his own book on Yeats). It might be worth considering whether there is not here an important and illuminating difference between Yeats and Rilke, and whether for Rilke the problem was not primarily one of communication and for Yeats primarily one of what might be called fortification. Rilke often spoke of the difficulty of finding external equivalents for experiences that were becoming ever more inward and incommunicable, but Yeats's mythology and 'philosophy' was largely, one is inclined to suspect, an attempt to insulate himself from the world of newspapers and popular science and to fortify with reasons what he believed upon instinct.

Mr. Ure's remarks on 'A Vision' and on its importance for Yeats and for his poetry are particularly good and sensible: he rightly insists that the important question is, not how far Yeats 'believed' in any or all of the particular doctrines of what he called 'the System', but whether the System enabled him to do what he believed it would, namely, to impose order on experience. Nevertheless, Mr. Ure, like other recent writers on Yeats, seems, perhaps, to assume too much as a matter of course that it was only in and through 'the System' that Yeats was able to write his greatest poetry, and that the best of the post-System poems ('Byzantium', for example, and 'Sailing to Byzantium', though not, surely, those 'little, mechanical songs', which, on p. 104, Mr. Ure professes to regard as the 'summit of the poetic mountain') are not only different from, but obviously greater than, the poems inspired by Maud Gonne and by the Lane controversy, which he scarcely mentions.

It is, perhaps, necessary to distinguish between the increased confidence in his own intuitions and instincts which 'the System' gave Yeats, and its direct and ascertainable influence upon particular poems: it may, indeed, be questioned whether more than a small minority of the best post-System poems are, in this latter sense, 'systematic'.

Both in his remarks, on pp. 43-5, suggested by the important poem 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory', and in his excellent summary, on pp. 69 ff.,

of the unresolved contradictions (or apparent contradictions) in Yeats's later poetry, Mr. Ure does not, perhaps, sufficiently recognize how deeply what Goethe would have called the 'daemonic' element in Yeats responded to what Goethe would have called the 'daemonic' element in life; nor does he, perhaps, sufficiently recognize, or sufficiently emphasize, the fact that Yeats never really settled down for long in Byzantium. Perhaps, after all, the correspondence with Lady Gerald Wellesley takes us nearer to the sources of Yeats's poetry than does 'A Vision'. There is 'mythology', no doubt, in that splendid ballad 'The Curse of Cromwell' (in *Last Poems*), but it owes more to the last pages of *Gulliver's Travels* than to 'the System':

And when I pay attention I must out and walk  
Among the dogs and horses that understand my talk.

*O what of that, O what of that,  
What is there left to say?*

J. B. LEISHMAN

**Studies in Honor of A. H. R. Fairchild.** Edited by CHARLES F. PROUTY. Pp. 191. (University of Missouri Studies, vol. xxi, no. 1.) Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1946. \$2.

These twelve essays in honour of Professor Emeritus A. H. R. Fairchild of the University of Missouri range in time and method from Professor Hardin Craig's monitory note on 'The Origin of the Passion Play: Matters of Theory as well as Fact' to Professor Woodburn Ross's excogitation of the 'basic attitudes' of Mr. John Steinbeck.

Of the bibliographical studies, Mr. G. E. Dawson's 'The Copyright of Shakespeare's Dramatic Works' is particularly thorough and valuable. Organizing and evaluating much complicated evidence, Mr. Dawson shows how each of the four seventeenth-century editions of Shakespeare's collected plays had a different set of 'principal undertakers'. Imprints and colophons are cryptic evidence, though Mr. Dawson infers that Henry Herringman was the chief copyright holder of the 1685 edition because his name appears on every imprint. The eighteenth-century history of the copyright is chiefly remarkable for Jacob Tonson's tenacious hold, and the practical possibility of monopoly only ended in 1774 when the Lords (*Donaldson v. Becket*) decided that the Act of 1709 had abolished copyright in all books.

The familiar case of *Bacon v. Shakespeare* is the theme of 'It Started with a Bullfight', in which Professor A. Westfall breaks with ease and relish the two main planks of the Baconian platform—Shakespeare's alleged lack of learning and the 'proofs' obtained by the inspired manipulation of Bacon's code. Professor J. R. Moore, on the other hand, mars an effective indictment of 'The Character of Iago' as fundamentally mediocre and often stupid by first warning his jury against the irrelevancy of such legends as *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* and then succumbing to their fascination by rediscovering Iago 'on the fringe of a modern war . . . perhaps . . . operating black markets'.



Professor C. I. Mullett's 'Hugh Plat: Elizabethan Virtuoso' offers new evidence of the unstable climate of scientific and social opinion in late Elizabethan times. As an investigator, Plat vacillates between deductive and inductive methods, between a Nature 'who has not made anything in vain' and 'the infallible grounds of practice'. As a business man, he invents briquets, portable pumps, and water-proof garments, but he is no projector of the kind exposed by Professor L. C. Knights; he desires the magistrates to regulate the price and the poor to benefit by the profits.

Space does not permit an examination of other essays, but a debt must be acknowledged to Professor Hyder E. Rollins for his discovery that the holograph copies of Keats's sonnet 'To Haydon' begin 'Forgive me, Haydon . . .' thereby securing a Shakespearian repetition in the third line. Professor H. W. Garrod and other editors follow a transcript made from the *Examiner* of 9 March 1817, and print the less euphonious 'Haydon! forgive me . . .'.

The custom of publishing essays in honour of scholars is becoming increasingly common. It would, I believe, serve the purposes of scholarship better than it does in this instance if essayists were to co-ordinate their contributions by investigating specific problems or periods from assigned points of view. Longer preparation would be required, and the result might be a slack mosaic, but that would be better than no pattern.

WILLIAM A. ARMSTRONG

**The Outlook in English Studies.** By SIMEON POTTER. Pp. 24. Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946. 1s. net.

This inaugural lecture of the Baines Professor of English Language and Philology in the University of Liverpool is a reminder of the valuable contributions to English studies made by the three previous incumbents of the chair, Wyld, Mawer, and Grattan. The author is concerned only with those aspects of English studies which are loosely grouped under the heading 'language', but he makes it clear how varied these aspects are. He touches, all too briefly, on phonetics, linguistic psychology, etymology, and semantics, and shows how language touches life at many points. The chief concern of a University School of English is defined as being 'the understanding and the interpretation of the text of English letters, of the entire body or *corpus* of memorable writing in the English language from the beginning', and linguistic knowledge is advocated as a means to that end. The old harmful antithesis between language and literature thus disappears: both are concerned with the same thing.

Professor Potter resists the temptation to make extravagant claims for his subject. He has praise for Greek, Latin, and French as instruments of expression, and he refuses to follow Jespersen in claiming that the development of English has been one of progress.

G. L. BROOK

## SUMMARY OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE

By KATHLEEN TILLOTSON

### BULLETIN OF THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY

Vol. 30, No. 2, May 1947

Geoffrey of Monmouth's use of the Bible in the *Historia Regum Britanniae* (Jacob Hammer), pp. 293-311.

### THE DURHAM UNIVERSITY JOURNAL

Vol. 39, No. 3 (New Ser. Vol. 8, No. 3), June 1947

Science and man in eighteenth-century poetry (John Butt), pp. 79-88.

Francis Jaques: Author of *The Queene of Corsica* (Clifford Leech), pp. 111-19.

### ENGLISH STUDIES

Vol. 28, No. 3, June 1947

Patterns of tempo and humour in *Othello* (John W. Draper), pp. 65-74.

Three notes on King Alfred's Boethius (R. W. Zandvoort), pp. 74-6.

'Al hende ase hak in chete'. A note on a Middle English alliterative poem (O. Arngart), pp. 77-9.

[Suggested interpretation of line.]

Current literature, 1946. I. Fiction, drama, and poetry (Frederick T. Wood), pp. 85-94.

### HUNTINGTON LIBRARY QUARTERLY

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The physician as atheist in Elizabethan England (Paul H. Kocher), pp. 229-49.

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Literature in the colonial south (Louis B. Wright), pp. 297-315.

### MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

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The renaissance forerunners of the neo-classic lyric (Herbert M. Schueller), pp. 310-16.

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The publication of Hannah More's first play (Chester L. Shaver), p. 343.

[Evidence for date of 1773.]

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[In comment on Milton in *Preface* of 1815.]

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[Corrections and added references to Buxton Forman's edition.]

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[See *N. & Q.*, vol. 191, pp. 202, 275; vol. 192, pp. 46, 134.]

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Hopkins's earlier poems. The order of composition (R. G. Howarth), pp. 255-6.

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[In Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Elder Brother*, i. ii.]

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[Eight hitherto unpublished letters, 1819-24.]

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